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JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS

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EDITED BY

ELIZABETH D'OYLEY

The novels of Jane Austen
Are the ones to get lost in.

Biography for Beginners

LONDON

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JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS

LIFE OF JANE AUSTEN

. In the year 1775, when George III had been fifteen years King of England, there was living in the Parsonage at Steventon in Hampshire, the Rev. George Austen. Kent was Mr. Austen's own county. He was a Tonbridge boy, and from Tonbridge School had gone to St. John's College, Oxford, where in time he became known as 'the handsome Proctor.' In 1758 he had come back to Tonbridge as second master; but three years later his cousin, Mr. Knight of Godmersham, had presented him to the living of Steventon: and in 1764 he had married and settled there.

Days passed peacefully in Steventon Parsonage. The house itself had a look of peace: a flat-faced house with small-paned sash windows and a latticed porch. A broad carriage drive swept past the porch. Tall trees stood near—elms where the rooks cawed, chestnuts brightly green against dark firs and grey-trunked sycamores. Behind the house, shut in on one side by a thatched mud wall, the garden sloped up to a terraced walk: an old-fashioned garden trim with neat rows of vegetables and, in summer, sweet with flowers. Beyond the

terrace, up the slope of a field, a path climbed to a small wood behind which stood the church, its spire gleaming grey amid the trees.

As the years went by, children came to the parson and his wife, each in its turn to be put out to nurse in the near-by village of Deane. Save for the coming of the children, life at the Parsonage was not eventful. Mr. Austen wrote his sermons, bought sheep, or read aloud to his wife: Mrs. Austen made her preserves, cut up her scarlet riding habit into breeches for her little boys, or darned the many holes in the many stockings. But away in the world great things were happening.

Across the Atlantic the American Colonies had risen in revolt under the leadership of a Virginian gentleman, Colonel George Washington. Up in London in the House of Commons, the new member for Bristol, Mr. Edmund Burke, was pleading in ringing words for conciliation with those colonies. In France Louis XVI was king, while far away in Troyes a young lad with a pock-marked face and a fiery tongue—Georges Danton, one day to make a name for himself in the French Revolution—was winning prizes for rhetoric.

Six Austen babies had been born to the parson and his wife when, on December 19, 1775, came another girl. 'She is to be Jenny,' her father wrote in a letter that day—Jenny or Jane—Jane Austen. So Jane was born while America was in rebellion and France not far from it, when Burke's voice echoed at Westminster, and Mary Lamb, in Crown Office Row, London, was nursing her baby brother Charles; and away on the Scottish Border a small lad of four with a lame leg and

an undaunted spirit—Walter Scott—listened with wide eyes to his grandmother's tales of raids and reavers.

Little Jane, like her brothers and sister before her, was put out to nurse in Deane, either her father or her mother going to see her every day. She was two when she came back to the Parsonage, to be the pet of her sister Cassandra, aged four. Cassy and Jenny were the only girls in the family. There were five brothers—James (ten), George (nine), Edward (eight), Henry (six), and Francis (three). Another brother was added later—baby Charles. Jane was fond of them all, but Cassandra had the largest share of her love.

Everything the girls did was done together. When Cassandra was sent away to school, Jane had to go with her, for, said her mother, 'If Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate.'

The school was at Reading in Berkshire: the Abbey School, kept by Mrs. Latournelle, the widow of a Frenchman, a stout lady with a cork leg. There Jane gathered 'a reasonable quantity of accomplishments' as Mrs. Goddard's pupils did (see page 167). The girls were back at the Parsonage by 1785, and their days, if uneventful, were well filled. Needlework, dancing, drawing, playing upon the pianoforte, singing: these were necessary accomplishments of a Georgian young lady, and to them, at the Parsonage, were added the duties of house-keeping. Jane had other, if less necessary, accomplishments. No one in the family could throw spilikins as cleverly as she, or play cup-and-ball so skilfully; and when in 1784 *The School for Scandal*

was played in the barn, she made a great hit as Mrs. Candour.

She grew up with a love of reading. She knew Shakespeare well, and read, among the moderns, Goldsmith (who had died the year before she was born), Johnson (whose death she must have heard spoken of when she was nine), Cowper (whose poems Mr. Austen used to read aloud to the family), and, later, Scott, who brought out his first volume of poetry in 1802. Her copy of Goldsmith's *History of England* still exists, with notes scribbled in its margins to mark her eager championing of King Charles I and of Mary, Queen of Scots.

There was a little sitting-room upstairs in the Parsonage, next to the girls' bedroom, with a chocolate-coloured carpet and a painted press with bookshelves. Jane's piano was there, and an oval mirror between the windows. It was there that she used to write—little gay burlesques at first (see page 17); a *History of England, by a partial, prejudiced and ignorant historian*; the first act of a comedy, etc. That was in 1792—when she was not seventeen. Here, too, must have been written the first of her more serious works, *Lady Susan* (see page 23).

She used to write on a little desk that could be put upon a table. 'My writing box,' she called it. Once she nearly lost it. At the 'Bull and George' inn at Dartford, it was put into the wrong chaise and was driven off on its way to Gravesend and the West Indies. Fortunately a horseman was sent in pursuit and rescued it.

In October, 1796, Jane began *Pride and Prejudice*, finishing it in the following August. She read

it in secret to Cassandra, while their small niece Anna, the child of their brother Edward, listened so intently that she began to talk downstairs of 'Darcy' and 'Elizabeth.' Jane's secret was nearly betrayed. The family were allowed to share it later, and shared, too, her disappointment when the book was offered to a London publisher and declined by return of post.

She had made a beginning with *Sense and Sensibility* (see page 74) before writing *Pride and Prejudice*. She revised it now, and in 1798 wrote *Northanger Abbey* (see page 104). But she was no nearer publication. Both these MSS. went to lie with *Pride and Prejudice*, in a drawer of Jane's bureau maybe.

In 1801 Mr. Austen resigned the living of Steventon to his eldest son James, and decided to retire to Bath. Jane and her mother went on ahead to look for a house. Jane had been to Bath before, when the story of Henry Tilney and Catherine Morland was no doubt taking shape in her mind. It was in Milsom Street that Henry lodged. In the Lower Rooms—which were burnt in 1820—he first met Catherine. Now Henry and Catherine were packed away in Jane's trunk with her silk stockings and her best gown; and, with Jane and her family, eventually found a home at No. 4 Sydney Place. Two years later the MS. was sold to a publisher, Crosby of London, for £10, but again came disappointment: the publisher did nothing with it. Thirteen years later Jane's brother Henry bought it back again for the same sum and, when the affair was concluded, had the satisfaction of telling Mr. Crosby that the MS. he had treated

so scornfully was by the author of *Pride and Prejudice*, then on its way to a second edition.

The Watsons (see page 129) was Jane's next effort at novel writing, but for some reason she never finished it. She gave up writing, in fact, and did not begin again for many years.

In January, 1805 (the year of the battle of Trafalgar), Mr. Austen died, leaving his wife and daughters with very little to live on. The house in Sydney Place had already been given up for one in Green Park Buildings. Now this was exchanged for lodgings at 25 Gay Street. Two years later, another move was made: to Southampton, where Captain Francis Austen, one of the brothers, offered them a share in his house, a big old-fashioned house in Castle Square, with a bit of the old city wall shutting in its garden, and a view across the Solent.

Then two years later came yet another move. Edward Austen, the third of the brothers, having succeeded to the property of a distant cousin at Chawton, in Hampshire, offered his mother a cottage in the village. There, in the summer of 1809, she and her daughters went to live. The cottage may still be seen—at the meeting of the Winchester and Gosport roads, a whitewashed cottage with sash windows and a tiled roof and a small strip of garden shut in by palings either side the door. In the garden at the back, shut off from the Winchester road by a thick hedge, Mrs. Austen, then nearly seventy, used to dig her own potatoes, wearing 'a green round frock like a day labourer's.'

At Chawton, Jane began to write again: in the common sitting-room, upon small sheets of paper

that could easily be slipped out of sight beneath the blotting paper. She began by revising the novels already written, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, that is—*Northanger Abbey* was still in the hands of the unenterprising Crosby. She had decided to publish at her own cost now. In October, 1811, *Sense and Sensibility* (*A Novel. In Three Volumes. By a Lady*) was offered to the public at the price of fifteen shillings. *Pride and Prejudice* followed in January, 1813, and by September of that year *Sense and Sensibility* was in its second edition.

Jane was in London then, staying with her brother Henry. 'Henry and I,' she wrote to Cassandra, who had been left behind at Chawton, 'went to the Exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased, particularly with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her. I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy.' She came to the conclusion that Mr. Darcy 'prizes any picture of her too much' to allow it to be 'exposed to the public eye.'

By January, 1814, Jane had begun *Emma* (see page 164) and finished *Mansfield Park* (see page 139). She had read *Mansfield Park* to Henry as they travelled up to London in the post-chaise. 'He took to Lady B. and Mrs. N. most kindly, and gives great praise to the drawing of the characters,' she wrote to Cassandra, to whom 'Lady B.' and 'Mrs. N.' were evidently already known. 'He understands them all, likes Fanny, and, I think, foresees how it will all end.' The book was published in the following May.

Jane's fame was growing. The Prince Regent read and admired her books. He sent her an invitation to see the library at Carlton House and graciously suggested that she might dedicate her next novel to him. When in 1815—the year of Waterloo—*Emma* appeared, it was prefaced, therefore, with a dedication—‘To His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, this work is by His Royal Highness's permission, most respectfully dedicated by His Royal Highness's dutiful and obedient humble servant the Author.’

Jane's health was failing by this time. In December she was rejoicing in the mildness of the winter: ‘I enjoy it all over me from top to toe, from right to left, longitudinally, perpendicularly, diagonally . . . nice, unwholesome, unseasonable, relaxing, close, muggy weather!’ The new year found her busy with *Persuasion* (see page 192). It was finished in the summer, but she was not pleased with the end, and later re-wrote it. Writing was varied by visits from nephews and nieces, when ‘Aunt Jane’ joined in their games, allowed them to dress up in clothes from her wardrobe, and played visitor in their make-believe house.

But she was growing weaker. She took to riding the donkey so that she might still go with Cassandra on her walks. She began another novel, *Sanditon*, writing twelve chapters in seven weeks. That was the last she wrote. In May, 1817, Cassandra took her to Winchester so that she might be under the care of a doctor. She went in Edward's carriage, with Henry riding his horse beside it, ‘in the rain almost the whole way.’ They found lodgings in College Street, with ‘a neat little drawing-room with

man and his servant were at the door, who had lost their way, were very cold and begged leave to warm themselves by our fire.

‘Won’t you admit them?’ said I.

‘You have no objection, my dear?’ said my father.

‘None in the world,’ replied my mother.

Mary, without waiting for any further commands, immediately left the room and quickly returned introducing the most beauteous and amiable youth I had ever beheld. The servant she kept to herself.

My natural sensibility had already been greatly affected by the sufferings of the unfortunate stranger, and no sooner did I first behold him than I felt that on him the happiness or misery of my future life must depend.

Adieu.

LAURA.

LESLEY CASTLE: THE INCONSIDERATE BRIDEGROOM

From Miss C. Lutterell to Miss M. Lesley.

Glenford, February 12.

I have a thousand excuses to beg for having so long delayed thanking you, my dear Peggy, for your agreeable letter, which, believe me, I should not have deferred doing, had not every moment of my time during the last five weeks been so fully employed in the necessary arrangements for my sister’s wedding, as to allow me no time to devote either to you or myself. And now what provokes me more than anything else is that the match is broken off, and all my labour thrown away. Imagine how great the disappointment must be to me, when you

consider that after having laboured both by night and by day in order to get the wedding dinner ready by the time appointed, after having roasted beef, broiled mutton, and stewed soup enough to last the new-married couple through the honeymoon, I had the mortification of finding that I had been roasting, broiling and stewing both the meat and myself to no purpose. Indeed, my dear friend, I never remember suffering any vexation equal to what I experienced on last Monday when my sister came running to me in the storeroom with her face as white as a whipped syllabub, and told me that Hervey had been thrown from his horse, had fractured his skull and was pronounced by his surgeon to be in the most imminent danger.

‘Good God!’ said I. ‘You don’t say so? Why what in the name of heaven will become of all the victuals! We shall never be able to eat it while it is good. However, we’ll call in the Surgeon to help us. I shall be able to manage the sirloin myself, my mother will eat the soup, and you and the doctor must finish the rest.’

Here I was interrupted by seeing my poor sister fall down to appearance lifeless upon one of the chests where we keep our table linen. I immediately called my mother and the maids, and at last we brought her to herself again; as soon as ever she was sensible, she expressed a determination of going instantly to Henry, and was so wildly bent on this scheme that we had the greatest difficulty in the world to prevent her putting it in execution; at last, however, more by force than entreaty we prevailed on her to go into her room; we laid her upon the bed, and she continued for some hours in the most

dreadful convulsions. My mother and I continued in the room with her, and when any intervals of tolerable composure in Eloisa would allow us, we joined in heartfelt lamentations on the dreadful waste in our provisions which this event must occasion, and in concerting some plan for getting rid of them. We agreed that the best thing we could do was to begin eating them immediately, and accordingly we ordered up the cold ham and fowls, and instantly began our devouring plan on them with great alacrity. We would have persuaded Eloisa to have taken a wing of a chicken, but she would not be persuaded. She was however much quieter than she had been; the convulsions she had before suffered having given way to an almost perfect insensibility. We endeavoured to rouse her by every means in our power, but to no purpose. I talked to her of Henry.

‘Dear Eloisa,’ said I, ‘there’s no occasion for your crying so much about such a trifle’ (for I was willing to make light of it in order to comfort her). ‘I beg you would not mind it. You see it does not vex me in the least; though perhaps *I* may suffer most from it after all; for I shall not only be obliged to eat up all the victuals I have dressed already, but must if Henry should recover (which however is not very likely) dress as much for you again; or should he die (as I suppose he will) I shall still have to prepare a dinner for you whenever you marry any one else. So you see that tho’ perhaps for the present it may afflict you to think of Henry’s sufferings, yet I dare say he’ll die soon, and then his pain will be over and you will be easy, whereas my trouble will last much longer, for work as hard as I may, I

am certain that the pantry cannot be cleared in less than a fortnight.'

Thus I did all in my power to console her. . . .

Your sincerely affectionate

C. L.

LADY SUSAN

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

LADY SUSAN VERNON, formerly of Vernon Castle.

FREDERICA, her daughter, aged 16.

MR. CHARLES VERNON, Lady Susan's brother-in-law.

MRS. VERNON (CATHERINE), his wife.

LADY DE COURCY, Mrs. Vernon's mother.

MR. REGINALD DE COURCY, Mrs. Vernon's brother.

SIR JAMES MARTIN.

THE STORY

Like *Love and Friendship* and *Lesley Castle*, *Lady Susan* is written in the form of letters. Lady Susan Vernon is a widow, an unscrupulous, self-seeking woman who had ruined her husband by her extravagances. A few months after his death, she goes to stay at Churchill with his brother, Mr. Charles Vernon, and his wife, meaning to remain there until she has 'something better in view.' Her daughter, Frederica, a girl of sixteen, she considers as 'the torment of her life' and 'the greatest simpleton on earth.' To be quit of her, she intends to marry her to Sir James Martin, but Frederica 'sets herself so violently against the match,' that her mother sends her off to Miss Summers' boarding school in Wigmore Street, London.

At Churchill, Lady Susan meets Mrs. Vernon's brother, Mr. Reginald de Courcy, a man twelve years younger than she is. She soon decides that he will do very well for her second husband and promptly sets about winning him, much to Mrs. Vernon's distress. Meanwhile Frederica, frightened by her mother's determination (still unchanged) that she shall marry Sir James Martin, tries to run away. She is caught, and as Miss Summers refuses to take her back into the school, Mr. Vernon goes up to London and brings her down to Churchill (see page 24). Thither also comes Sir James; and Frederica, in desperation, appeals to

the chivalry of Reginald de Courcy. The result is that he and Lady Susan quarrel (see page 27). The quarrel is made up, and when Lady Susan soon afterwards removes herself to London, Reginald follows. There he is not long in discovering her worthlessness. It is Lady Susan herself who finally marries Sir James. Frederica is left in the care of her kind uncle and aunt, and the interest of Reginald being already aroused in her, we are given to understand that before long interest will become love, and all will end happily.

FREDERICA COMES TO CHURCHILL—

Mrs. Vernon to Lady de Courcy.

Churchill.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

Mr. Vernon returned on Thursday night, bringing his niece with him. Lady Susan had received a line from him by that day's post, informing her that Miss Summers had absolutely refused to allow of Miss Vernon's continuance in her academy; we were therefore prepared for her arrival, and expected them impatiently the whole evening. They came while we were at tea, and I never saw any creature look so frightened as Frederica when she entered the room.

Lady Susan, who had been shedding tears before, and showing great agitation at the idea of the meeting, received her with perfect self-command, and without betraying the least tenderness of spirit. She hardly spoke to her, and on Frederica's bursting into tears as soon as we were seated, took her out of the room, and did not return for some time. When she did, her eyes looked very red, and she was as much agitated as before. We saw no more of her daughter.

Poor Reginald was beyond measure concerned to

see his fair friend¹ in such distress, and watched her with so much tender solicitude, that I, who occasionally caught her observing his countenance with exultation, was quite out of patience. This pathetic representation lasted the whole evening, and so ostentatious and artful a display has entirely convinced me that she did in fact feel nothing. I am more angry with her than ever since I have seen her daughter; the poor girl looks so unhappy that my heart aches for her.

Lady Susan is surely too severe, for Frederica does not seem to have the sort of temper to make severity necessary. She looks perfectly timid, dejected, and penitent. She is very pretty, though not so handsome as her mother, nor at all like her. Her complexion is delicate, but neither so fair nor so blooming as Lady Susan's, and she has quite the Vernon cast of countenance, the oval face and mild dark eyes, and there is peculiar sweetness in her look when she speaks either to her uncle or me, for as we behave kindly to her we have of course engaged her gratitude.

Her mother has insinuated that her temper is intractable, but I never saw a face less indicative of any evil disposition than hers; and from what I can see of the behaviour of each to the other, the invariable severity of Lady Susan and the silent dejection of Frederica, I am led to believe as heretofore that the former has no real love for her daughter, and has never done her justice or treated her affectionately.

I have not been able to have any conversation with my niece; she is shy, and I think I can see

¹ Lady Susan.

that some pains are taken to prevent her being much with me. Nothing satisfactory transpires as to her reason for running away. Her kind-hearted uncle, you may be sure, was too fearful of distressing her to ask many questions as they travelled. I wish it had been possible for me to fetch her instead of him. I think I should have discovered the truth in the course of a thirty-mile journey.

The small pianoforte has been removed within these few days, at Lady Susan's request, into her dressing-room, and Frederica spends great part of the day there, practising as it is called; but I seldom hear any noise when I pass that way; what she does with herself there I do not know. There are plenty of books, but it is not every girl who has been running wild the first fifteen years of her life, that can or will read. Poor creature! the prospect from her window is not very instructive, for that room overlooks the lawn, you know, with the shrubbery on one side, where she may see her mother walking for an hour together in earnest conversation with Reginald. A girl of Frederica's age must be childish indeed, if such things do not strike her. Is it not inexcusable to give such an example to a daughter?

Yet Reginald still thinks Lady Susan the best of mothers, and still condemns Frederica as a worthless girl! He is convinced that her attempt to run away proceeded from no justifiable cause, and had no provocation. I am sure I cannot say that it *had*, but while Miss Summers declares that Miss Vernon showed no signs of obstinacy or perverseness during her whole stay in Wigmore Street, till she was detected in this scheme, I cannot so readily

credit what Lady Susan has made him, and wants to make me believe, that it was merely an impatience of restraint and a desire of escaping from the tuition of masters which brought on the plan of an elopement.

O Reginald, how is your judgement enslaved! He scarcely dares even allow her to be handsome, and when I speak of her beauty, replies only that her eyes have no brilliancy! Sometimes he is sure she is deficient in understanding, and at others that her temper only is in fault. In short, when a person is always to deceive, it is impossible to be consistent. Lady Susan finds it necessary that Frederica should be to blame, and probably has sometimes judged it expedient to excuse her of ill-nature and sometimes to lament her want of sense. Reginald is only repeating after her ladyship.

I remain, &c., &c.,

CATHERINE VERNON.

AND FINDS A CHAMPION THERE

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

Let me congratulate you, my dearest mother! The affair which has given us so much anxiety is drawing to a happy conclusion. Our prospect is most delightful, and since matters have now taken so favourable a turn, I am quite sorry that I ever imparted my apprehensions to you; for the pleasure of learning that the danger is over is perhaps dearly purchased by all that you have previously suffered. I am so much agitated by delight that I can scarcely hold a pen; but am determined to send you a few

short lines by James, that you may have some explanation of what must so greatly astonish you, as that Reginald should be returning to Parklands.

I was sitting about half an hour ago with Sir James in the breakfast parlour, when my brother called me out of the room. I instantly saw that something was the matter; his complexion was raised, and he spoke with great emotion; you know his eager manner, my dear mother, when his mind is interested.

‘Catherine,’ said he, ‘I am going home to-day; I am sorry to leave you, but I must go: it is a great while since I have seen my father and mother. I am going to send James forward with my hunters immediately; if you have any letter, therefore, he can take it. I shall not be at home myself till Wednesday or Thursday, as I shall go through London, where I have business.

‘But before I leave you,’ he continued, speaking in a lower tone, and with still greater energy, ‘I must warn you of one thing—do not let Frederica Vernon be made unhappy by that Martin. He wants to marry her; her mother promotes the match, but she cannot endure the idea of it. Be assured that I speak from the fullest conviction of the truth of what I say; I *know* that Frederica is made wretched by Sir James’s continuing here. She is a sweet girl, and deserves a better fate. Send him away immediately; he is only a fool; but what her mother can mean, Heaven only knows!’

‘Good-bye,’ he added, shaking my hand with earnestness; ‘I do not know when you will see me again; but remember what I tell you of Frederica; you *must* make it your business to see justice done

her. She is an amiable girl, and has a very superior mind to what we have given her credit for.'

He then left me, and ran upstairs. I would not try to stop him, for I know what his feelings must be. The nature of mine, as I listened to him, I need not attempt to describe; for a minute or two I remained in the same spot, overpowered by wonder of a most agreeable sort indeed; yet it required some consideration to be tranquilly happy.

In about ten minutes after my return to the parlour Lady Susan entered the room. I concluded, of course, that she and Reginald had been quarrelling; and looked with anxious curiosity for a confirmation of my belief in her face. Mistress of deceit, however, she appeared perfectly unconcerned, and after chatting on indifferent subjects for a short time, said to me, 'I find from Wilson that we are going to lose Mr. De Courcy—is it true that he leaves Churchill this morning?' I replied that it was. 'He told us nothing of all this last night,' said she, laughing, 'or even this morning at breakfast; but perhaps he did not know it himself. Young men are often hasty in their resolutions, and not more sudden in forming than unsteady in keeping them. I should not be surprised if he were to change his mind at last, and not go.'

She soon afterwards left the room. I trust, however, my dear mother, that we have no reason to fear an alteration of his present plan; things have gone too far. They must have quarrelled, and about Frederica, too. Her calmness astonishes me. What delight will be yours in seeing him again; in seeing him still worthy your esteem, still capable of forming your happiness! When I next

write I shall be able to tell you that Sir James is gone, Lady Susan vanquished, and Frederica at peace. We have much to do, but it shall be done. I am all impatience to hear how this astonishing change was effected. I finish as I began with the warmest congratulations.

Yours ever, &c.,
CATH. VERNON.

'Is that his design in settling here?'

'Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes.'

'I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party.'

'My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty.'

'In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of.'

'But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood.'

'It is more than I engage for, I assure you.'

'But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no new-comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him, if you do not.'

'You are over-scrupulous surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.'

'I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is

not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference.'

'They have none of them much to recommend them,' replied he; 'they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.'

'Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.'

'You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.'

'Ah! you do not know what I suffer.'

'But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood.'

'It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them.'

'Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all.'

MR. DARCY FINDS ELIZABETH 'TOLERABLE'

Not all that Mrs. Bennet, however, with the assistance of her five daughters, could ask on the subject was sufficient to draw from her husband any satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley. They attacked him in various ways—with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions and distant surmises; but he eluded the skill of them all, and they were at last obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbour Lady Lucas. Her

report was highly favourable. Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

'If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield,' said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, 'and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for.'

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate, for they had the advantage of ascertaining from an upper window that he wore a blue coat and rode a black horse.

An invitation to dinner was soon afterwards dispatched; and already had Mrs. Bennet planned the courses that were to do credit to her housekeeping, when an answer arrived which deferred it all. Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and consequently unable to accept the honour of their invitation, &c. Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted. She could not imagine what business he could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire; and she began to fear that he might be always flying about from one place to another, and never settled at Netherfield as he ought to be. Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by

starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball; and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a number of ladies, but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing that, instead of twelve, he had brought only six with him from London, his five sisters and a cousin. And when the party entered the assembly room, it consisted of only five altogether: Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentleman-like; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report, which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room; he was

lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behaviour was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters.

Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances; and during part of that time, Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to overhear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley, who came from the dance for a few minutes, to press his friend to join it.

'Come, Darcy,' said he, 'I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.'

'I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.'

'I would not be so fastidious as you are,' cried

Bingley, 'for a kingdom! Upon my honour, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty.'

'*You* are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,' said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

'Oh! she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you.'

'Which do you mean?' and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till, catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, 'She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.'

Mr. Bingley followed his advice. Mr. Darcy walked off; and Elizabeth remained with no very cordial feelings towards him. She told the story, however, with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous.

MR. COLLINS ANNOUNCES HIMSELF

'I hope, my dear,' said Mr. Bennet to his wife, as they were at breakfast the next morning, 'that you have ordered a good dinner to-day, because I have reason to expect an addition to our family party.'

‘Who do you mean, my dear? I know of nobody that is coming I am sure, unless Charlotte Lucas should happen to call in; and I hope *my* dinners are good enough for her. I do not believe she often sees such at home.’

‘The person of whom I speak is a gentleman and a stranger.’ Mrs. Bennet’s eyes sparkled.

‘A gentleman and a stranger! It is Mr. Bingley, I am sure. Why, Jane—you never dropped a word of this; you sly thing! Well, I am sure I shall be extremely glad to see Mr. Bingley. But—good lord! how unlucky! there is not a bit of fish to be got to-day. Lydia, my love, ring the bell. I must speak to Hill, this moment.’

‘It is *not* Mr. Bingley,’ said her husband; ‘it is a person whom I never saw in the whole course of my life.’

This roused a general astonishment; and he had the pleasure of being eagerly questioned by his wife and five daughters at once.

After amusing himself some time with their curiosity, he thus explained. ‘About a month ago I received this letter, and about a fortnight ago I answered it, for I thought it a case of some delicacy and requiring early attention. It is from my cousin, Mr. Collins, who, when I am dead, may turn you all out of this house as soon as he pleases.’

‘Oh! my dear,’ cried his wife, ‘I cannot bear to hear that mentioned. Pray do not talk of that odious man. I do think it is the hardest thing in the world, that your estate should be entailed away from your own children; and I am sure, if I had been you, I should have tried long ago to do something or other about it.’

Jane and Elizabeth attempted to explain to her the nature of an entail. They had often attempted it before, but it was a subject on which Mrs. Bennet was beyond the reach of reason; and she continued to rail bitterly against the cruelty of settling an estate away from a family of five daughters, in favour of a man whom nobody cared anything about.

‘It certainly is a most iniquitous affair,’ said Mr. Bennet, ‘and nothing can clear Mr. Collins from the guilt of inheriting Longbourn. But if you will listen to his letter, you may perhaps be a little softened by his manner of expressing himself.’

‘No, that I am sure I shall not; and I think it was very impertinent of him to write to you at all, and very hypocritical. I hate such false friends. Why could not he keep on quarrelling with you, as his father did before him?’

‘Why, indeed, he does seem to have had some filial scruples on that head, as you will hear.’

*Hunsford, near Westerham, Kent,
15th October.*

DEAR SIR,—

The disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late honoured father, always gave me much uneasiness, and since I have had the misfortune to lose him, I have frequently wished to heal the breach; but for some time I was kept back by my doubts, fearing lest it might seem disrespectful to his memory for me to be on good terms with any one, with whom it had always pleased him to be at variance.

‘There, Mrs. Bennet.

My mind, however, is now made up on the subject, for having received ordination at Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, whose bounty and beneficence has preferred me to the valuable rectory of this parish, where it shall be my earnest endeavour to demean myself with grateful respect towards her Ladyship, and be ever ready to perform those rites and ceremonies which are instituted by the Church of England. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace in all families within the reach of my influence; and on these grounds I flatter myself that my present overtures of goodwill are highly commendable, and that the circumstance of my being next in the entail of Longbourn estate, will be kindly overlooked on your side, and not lead you to reject the offered olive-branch. I cannot be otherwise than concerned at being the means of injuring your amiable daughters, and beg leave to apologize for it, as well as to assure you of my readiness to make them every possible amends,—but of this hereafter. If you should have no objection to receive me into your house, I propose myself the satisfaction of waiting on you and your family, Monday, November 18th, by four o'clock, and shall probably trespass on your hospitality till the Saturday se'night¹ following, which I can do without any inconvenience, as Lady Catherine is far from objecting to my occasional absence on a Sunday, provided that some other clergyman is engaged to do the duty of the day.

¹ Seven nights, i.e. a week.

I remain, dear sir, with respectful compliments to your lady and daughters, your well-wisher and friend,

WILLIAM COLLINS.

‘At four o’clock, therefore, we may expect this peacemaking gentleman,’ said Mr. Bennet, as he folded up the letter. ‘He seems to be a most conscientious and polite young man, upon my word; and I doubt not will prove a valuable acquaintance, especially if Lady Catherine should be so indulgent as to let him come to us again.’

‘There is some sense in what he says about the girls however; and, if he is disposed to make them any amends, I shall not be the person to discourage him.’

‘Though it is difficult,’ said Jane, ‘to guess in what way he can mean to make us the atonement he thinks our due, the wish is certainly to his credit.’

Elizabeth was chiefly struck with his extraordinary deference for Lady Catherine, and his kind intention of christening, marrying and burying his parishioners whenever it were required.

‘He must be an oddity, I think,’ said she. ‘I cannot make him out. There is something very pompous in his style. And what can he mean by apologizing for being next in the entail? We cannot suppose he would help it, if he could. Can he be a sensible man, sir?’

‘No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him.’

MR. COLLINS PROPOSES

The next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words.

‘May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?’

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered,

‘Oh dear!—Yes—certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy—I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs.’ And gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out,

‘Dear, ma’am, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.’

‘No, no, nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are.’ And upon Elizabeth’s seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, ‘Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins.’

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction

—and a moment's consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal by incessant employment the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began.

'Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.'

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him farther, and he continued:

'My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—

is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation.'

'Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so,' said Mr. Collins very gravely—'but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy and other amiable qualifications.'

'Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. The matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled.' And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her:

'When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on this subject I shall hope to receive a more

favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character.'

'Really, Mr. Collins,' cried Elizabeth with some warmth, 'you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one.'

'You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of de Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into farther consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females.'

'I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretension

whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart.'

'You are uniformly charming!' cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; 'and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable.'

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew;—determined, that if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Mr. Collins was not left long to the silent contemplation of his successful love; for Mrs. Bennet, having dawdled about in the vestibule to watch for the end of the conference, no sooner saw Elizabeth open the door and with quick step pass her towards the staircase, than she entered the breakfast-room, and congratulated both him and herself in warm terms on the happy prospect of their nearer connection. Mr. Collins received and returned these

felicitations with equal pleasure, and then proceeded to relate the particulars of their interview, with the result of which he trusted he had every reason to be satisfied, since the refusal which his cousin had steadfastly given him would naturally flow from her bashful modesty and the genuine delicacy of her character.

This information, however, startled Mrs. Bennet; —she would have been glad to have been equally satisfied that her daughter had meant to encourage him by protesting against his proposals, but she dared not believe it, and could not help saying so.

‘But depend upon it, Mr. Collins,’ she added, ‘that Lizzy shall be brought to reason. I will speak to her about it myself directly. She is a very headstrong foolish girl, and does not know her own interest; but I will *make* her know it.’

‘Pardon me for interrupting you, madam,’ cried Mr. Collins; ‘but if she is really headstrong and foolish, I know not whether she would altogether be a very desirable wife to a man in my situation, who naturally looks for happiness in the marriage state. If therefore she actually persists in rejecting my suit, perhaps it were better not to force her into accepting me, because if liable to such defects of temper, she could not contribute much to my felicity.’

‘Sir, you quite misunderstand me,’ said Mrs. Bennet, alarmed. ‘Lizzy is only headstrong in such matters as these. In everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we shall very soon settle it with her, I am sure.’

She would not give him time to reply, but hurrying instantly to her husband, called out as he entered the library,

‘Oh! Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in an uproar. You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have *her*.’

Mr. Bennet raised his eyes from his book as she entered, and fixed them on her face with a calm unconcern which was not in the least altered by her communication.

‘I have not the pleasure of understanding you,’ said he, when she had finished her speech. ‘Of what are you talking?’

‘Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy. Lizzy declares she will not have Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not have Lizzy.’

‘And what am I to do on the occasion? It seems an hopeless business.’

‘Speak to Lizzy about it yourself. Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him.’

‘Let her be called down. She shall hear my opinion.’

Mrs. Bennet rang the bell, and Miss Elizabeth was summoned to the library.

‘Come here, child,’ cried her father as she appeared. ‘I have sent for you on an affair of importance. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?’ Elizabeth replied that it was. ‘Very well—and this offer of marriage you have refused?’

‘I have, sir.’

‘Very well. We now come to the point. Your

mother insists upon your accepting it. Is not it so, Mrs. Bennet?’

‘Yes, or I will never see her again.’

‘An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*.’

THE HOME OF FITZWILLIAM DARCY, ESQ.

Elizabeth, as they drove along, watched for the first appearance of Pemberley Woods with some perturbation; and when at length they turned in at the lodge, her spirits were in a high flutter.

The park was very large, and contained great variety of ground. They entered it in one of its lowest points, and drove for some time through a beautiful wood, stretching over a wide extent.

Elizabeth’s mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road with some abruptness wound. It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so

Mr. Darc;

little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!

They descended the hill, crossed the bridge, and drove to the door; and, while examining the nearer aspect of the house, all her apprehensions of meeting its owner returned. She dreaded lest the chambermaid¹ had been mistaken. On applying to see the place, they were admitted into the hall; and Elizabeth, as they waited for the housekeeper, had leisure to wonder at her being where she was.

The housekeeper came; a respectable-looking, elderly woman, much less fine, and more civil, than she had any notion of finding her. They followed her into the dining-parlour. It was a large, well-proportioned room, handsomely fitted up. Elizabeth, after slightly surveying it, went to a window to enjoy its prospect. The hill, crowned with wood, from which they had descended, receiving increased abruptness from the distance, was a beautiful object. Every disposition of the ground was good; and she looked on the whole scene, the river, the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley, as far as she could trace it, with delight. As they passed into other rooms, these objects were taking different positions; but from every window there were beauties to be seen. The rooms were lofty and handsome, and their furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor; but Elizabeth saw with admiration of his taste, that it was neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of

¹ At the inn where they were staying.

splendour, and more real elegance, than the furniture of Rosings.¹

‘And of this place,’ thought she, ‘I might have been mistress! With these rooms I might now have been familiarly acquainted! Instead of viewing them as a stranger, I might have rejoiced in them as my own, and welcomed to them as visitors my uncle and aunt.—But no,’—recollecting herself,—‘that could never be: my uncle and aunt would have been lost to me: I should not have been allowed to invite them.’

This was a lucky recollection—it saved her from something like a regret.

She longed to inquire of the housekeeper, whether her master were really absent, but had not courage for it. At length, however, the question was asked by her uncle; and she turned away with alarm, while Mrs. Reynolds replied that he was, adding, ‘but we expect him to-morrow, with a large party of friends.’ How rejoiced was Elizabeth that their own journey had not by any circumstance been delayed a day!

Her aunt now called her to look at a picture. She approached, and saw the likeness of Mr. Wickham suspended, amongst several other miniatures, over the mantelpiece. Her aunt asked her, smilingly, how she liked it. The housekeeper came forward, and told them it was the picture of a young gentleman, the son of her late master’s steward, who had been brought up by him at his own expense. ‘He is now gone into the army,’ she added, ‘but I am afraid he has turned out very wild.’

¹ The home of Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

Mrs. Gardiner looked at her niece with a smile, but Elizabeth could not return it.

'And that,' said Mrs. Reynolds, pointing to another of the miniatures, 'is my master—and very like him. It was drawn at the same time as the other—about eight years ago.'

'I have heard much of your master's fine person,' said Mrs. Gardiner, looking at the picture; 'it is a handsome face. But, Lizzy, you can tell us whether it is like or not.'

Mrs. Reynolds's respect for Elizabeth seemed to increase on this intimation of her knowing her master.

'Does that young lady know Mr. Darcy?'

Elizabeth coloured, and said—'A little.'

'And do not you think him a very handsome gentleman, ma'am?'

'Yes, very handsome.' -

'I am sure *I* know none so handsome; but in the gallery upstairs you will see a finer, larger picture of him than this. This room was my late master's favourite room, and these miniatures are just as they used to be then. He was very fond of them.'

This accounted to Elizabeth for Mr. Wickham's being among them.

Mrs. Reynolds then directed their attention to one of Miss Darcy, drawn when she was only eight years old.

'And is Miss Darcy as handsome as her brother?' said Mr. Gardiner.

'Oh! yes—the handsomest young lady that ever was seen; and so accomplished! She plays and sings all day long. In the next room is a new instrument just come down for her—a present

from my master; she comes here to-morrow with him.'

Mr. Gardiner, whose manners were easy and pleasant, encouraged her communicativeness by his questions and remarks; Mrs. Reynolds, either from pride or attachment, had evidently great pleasure in talking of her master and his sister.

'Is your master much at Pemberley in the course of the year?'

'Not so much as I could wish, sir; but I dare say he may spend half his time here; and Miss Darcy is always down for the summer months.'

'Except,' thought Elizabeth, 'when she goes to Ramsgate.'

'If your master would marry, you might see more of him.'

'Yes, sir; but I do not know when *that* will be. I do not know who is good enough for him.'

Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner smiled. Elizabeth could not help saying, 'It is very much to his credit, I am sure, that you should think so.'

'I say no more than the truth, and what everybody will say that knows him,' replied the other. Elizabeth thought this was going pretty far; and she listened with increasing astonishment as the housekeeper added, 'I have never had a cross word from him in my life, and I have known him ever since he was four years old.'

This was praise, of all others most extraordinary, most opposite to her ideas. That he was not a good-tempered man had been her firmest opinion. Her keenest attention was awakened; she longed to hear more, and was grateful to her uncle for saying,

'There are very few people of whom so much

can be said. You are lucky in having such a master.'

'Yes, sir, I know I am. If I was to go through the world, I could not meet with a better. But I have always observed that they who are good-natured when children are good-natured when they grow up; and he was always the sweetest-tempered, most generous-hearted boy in the world.'

Elizabeth almost stared at her. 'Can this be Mr. Darcy!' thought she.

'His father was an excellent man,' said Mrs. Gardiner.

'Yes, ma'am, that he was indeed; and his son will be just like him—just as affable to the poor.'

Elizabeth listened, wondered, doubted, and was impatient for more. Mrs. Reynolds could interest her on no other point. She related the subject of the pictures, the dimensions of the rooms, and the price of the furniture, in vain. Mr. Gardiner, highly amused by the kind of family prejudice, to which he attributed her excessive commendation of her master, soon led again to the subject; and she dwelt with energy on his many merits, as they proceeded together up the great staircase.

'He is the best landlord, and the best master,' said she, 'that ever lived. Not like the wild young men nowadays, who think of nothing but themselves. There is not one of his tenants or servants but what will give him a good name. Some people call him proud; but I am sure I never saw anything of it. To my fancy, it is only because he does not rattle away like other young men.'

'In what an amiable light does this place him!' thought Elizabeth.

'This fine account of him,' whispered her aunt, as they walked, 'is not quite consistent with his behaviour to our poor friend.'¹

'Perhaps we might be deceived.'

'That is not very likely; our authority was too good.'

On reaching the spacious lobby above, they were shown into a very pretty sitting-room, lately fitted up with greater elegance and lightness than the apartments below; and were informed that it was but just done, to give pleasure to Miss Darcy, who had taken a liking to the room, when last at Pemberley.

'He is certainly a good brother,' said Elizabeth, as she walked towards one of the windows.

Mrs. Reynolds anticipated Miss Darcy's delight, when she should enter the room. 'And this is always the way with him,' she added. 'Whatever can give his sister any pleasure is sure to be done in a moment. There is nothing he would not do for her.'

The picture gallery, and two or three of the principal bedrooms, were all that remained to be shown. In the former were many good paintings; but Elizabeth knew nothing of the art; and from such as had been already visible below she had willingly turned to look at some drawings of Miss Darcy's, in crayons, whose subjects were usually more interesting, and also more intelligible.

In the gallery there were many family portraits, but they could have little to fix the attention of a stranger. Elizabeth walked on in quest of the only face whose features would be known to her. At

¹ Mr. Wickham.

last it arrested her—and she beheld a striking resemblance of Mr. Darcy, with such a smile over the face as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her. She stood several minutes before the picture in earnest contemplation, and returned to it again before they quitted the gallery. Mrs. Reynolds informed them that it had been taken in his father's lifetime.

There was certainly at this moment, in Elizabeth's mind, a more gentle sensation towards the original than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance. The commendation bestowed on him by Mrs. Reynolds was of no trifling nature. What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant? As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many people's happiness were in his guardianship!—how much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow!—how much of good or evil must be done by him! Every idea that had been brought forward by the housekeeper was favourable to his character, and as she stood before the canvas, on which he was represented, and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression.

When all of the house that was open to general inspection had been seen, they returned downstairs, and taking leave of the housekeeper, were consigned over to the gardener, who met them at the hall door.

As they walked across the lawn towards the river, Elizabeth turned back to look again; her uncle and aunt stopped also, and while the former was con-

jecturing as to the date of the building, the owner of it himself suddenly came forward from the road, which led behind it to the stables.

They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance that it was impossible to avoid his sight. Their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush. He absolutely started, and for a moment seemed immovable from surprise; but shortly recovering himself, advanced towards the party, and spoke to Elizabeth, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least of perfect civility.

She had instinctively turned away; but, stopping on his approach, received his compliments with an embarrassment impossible to be overcome. Had his first appearance, or his resemblance to the picture they had just been examining, been insufficient to assure the other two that they now saw Mr. Darcy, the gardener's expression of surprise, on beholding his master, must immediately have told it. They stood a little aloof while he was talking to their niece, who, astonished and confused, scarcely dared lift her eyes to his face, and knew not what answer she returned to his civil inquiries after her family. Amazed at the alteration in his manner since they last parted, every sentence that he uttered was increasing her embarrassment; and every idea of the impropriety of her being found there recurring to her mind, the few minutes in which they continued together were some of the most uncomfortable of her life. Nor did he seem much more at ease; when he spoke, his accent had none of its usual sedateness; and he repeated his inquiries as to the time of her having left Longbourn, and of her stay

in Derbyshire, so often, and in so hurried a way, as plainly spoke the distraction of his thoughts.

At length, every idea seemed to fail him; and, after standing a few moments without saying a word, he suddenly recollected himself, and took leave.

A VISIT FROM LADY CATHERINE DE BOURGH

One morning, about a week after Bingley's engagement with Jane had been formed, as he and the females of the family were sitting together in the dining-room, their attention was suddenly drawn to the window, by the sound of a carriage; and they perceived a chaise and four driving up the lawn. It was too early in the morning for visitors, and besides, the equipage did not answer to that of any of their neighbours. The horses were post¹; and neither the carriage, nor the livery of the servant who preceded it, were familiar to them. As it was certain, however, that somebody was coming, Bingley instantly prevailed on Miss Bennet to avoid the confinement of such an intrusion, and walk away with him into the shrubbery. They both set off, and the conjectures of the remaining three continued, though with little satisfaction, till the door was thrown open, and their visitor entered. It was Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

They were of course all intending to be surprised; but their astonishment was beyond their expectation; and on the part of Mrs. Bennet and Kitty, though she was perfectly unknown to them, even inferior to what Elizabeth felt.

¹ Horses kept at an inn for use of the postboys or for hire by travellers.

She entered the room with an air more than usually ungracious, made no other reply to Elizabeth's salutation than a slight inclination of the head, and sat down without saying a word. Elizabeth had mentioned her name to her mother, on her ladyship's entrance, though no request of introduction had been made.

Mrs. Bennet, all amazement, though flattered by having a guest of such high importance, received her with the utmost politeness. After sitting for a moment in silence, she said very stiffly to Elizabeth:

'I hope you are well, Miss Bennet. That lady, I suppose, is your mother.'

Elizabeth replied very concisely that she was.

'And *that*, I suppose, is one of your sisters.'

'Yes, madam,' said Mrs. Bennet, delighted to speak to a Lady Catherine. 'She is my youngest girl but one. My youngest of all is lately married, and my eldest is somewhere about the grounds, walking with a young man, who I believe will soon become a part of the family.'

'You have a very small park here,' returned Lady Catherine after a short silence.

'It is nothing in comparison of Rosings, my lady, I dare say; but I assure you it is much larger than Sir William Lucas's.'

'This must be a most inconvenient sitting-room for the evening, in summer; the windows are full west.'

Mrs. Bennet assured her that they never sat there after dinner; and then added:

'May I take the liberty of asking your ladyship whether you left Mr. and Mrs. Collins well.'

‘Yes, very well. I saw them the night before last.’

Elizabeth now expected that she would produce a letter for her from Charlotte, as it seemed the only probable motive for her calling. But no letter appeared, and she was completely puzzled.

Mrs. Bennet, with great civility, begged her ladyship to take some refreshment; but Lady Catherine very resolutely, and not very politely, declined eating anything; and then rising up, said to Elizabeth:

‘Miss Bennet, there seemed to be a prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of your lawn. I should be glad to take a turn in it, if you will favour me with your company.’

‘Go, my dear,’ cried her mother, ‘and show her ladyship about the different walks. I think she will be pleased with the hermitage.’

Elizabeth obeyed, and, running into her own room for her parasol, attended her noble guest downstairs. As they passed through the hall, Lady Catherine opened the door into the dining-parlour and drawing-room, and pronouncing them, after a short survey, to be decent-looking rooms, walked on.

Her carriage remained at the door, and Elizabeth saw that her waiting-woman was in it. They proceeded in silence along the gravel walk that led to the copse; Elizabeth was determined to make no effort for conversation with a woman who was now more than usually insolent and disagreeable.

‘How could I ever think her like her nephew?’ said she, as she looked in her face.

As soon as they entered the copse, Lady Catherine began in the following manner:

‘You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to under-

stand the reason of my journey hither. Your own heart, your own conscience, must tell you why I come.'

Elizabeth looked with unaffected astonishment.

'Indeed, you are mistaken, madam. I have not been at all able to account for the honour of seeing you here.'

'Miss Bennet,' replied her ladyship in an angry tone, 'you ought to know that I am not to be trifled with. But however insincere *you* may choose to be, you shall not find *me* so. My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness, and in a cause of such moment as this, I shall certainly not depart from it. A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that *you*, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I *know* it must be a scandalous falsehood; though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.'

'If you believed it impossible to be true,' said Elizabeth, colouring with astonishment and disdain, 'I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What could your ladyship propose by it?'

'At once to insist upon having such a report universally contradicted.'

'Your coming to Longbourn, to see me and my family,' said Elizabeth, coolly, 'will be rather a confirmation of it; if, indeed, such a report is in existence.'

'If! do you then pretend to be ignorant of it? Has it not been industriously circulated by yourselves? Do you not know that such a report is spread abroad?'

'I never heard that it was.'

'And can you likewise declare, that there is no *foundation* for it?'

'I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions, which *I* shall not choose to answer.'

'This is not to be borne! Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?'

'Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible

'It ought to be so; it must be so, while he retains the use of his reason. But *your* arts and allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in.'

'If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it.

'Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this. I am almost the nearest relation he has in the world, and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns.'

'But you are not entitled to know *mine*; nor will such behaviour as this ever induce me to be explicit.'

'Let me be rightly understood, This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place. No, never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to *my daughter*. Now what have you to say?'

'Only this; that if he is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me.'

Lady Catherine hesitated for a moment, and then replied:

‘The engagement between them is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy, they have been intended for each other. It was the favourite wish of *his* mother, as well as of *hers*. While in their cradles, we planned the union: and now, at the moment when the wishes of both sisters would be accomplished, is their marriage to be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family! Do you pay no regard to the wishes of his friends? To his ~~tacit~~ engagement with Miss de Bourgh? Are you lost to every feeling of propriety and delicacy? Have you not heard me say that from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin?’

‘Yes, and I have heard it before. But what is that to me? If there is no other objection to my marrying your nephew, I shall certainly not be kept from it, by knowing that his mother and aunt wished him to marry Miss de Bourgh. You both did as much as you could, in planning the marriage. Its completion depended on others. If Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? and if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?’

‘Because honour, decorum, prudence, nay interest, forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, interest; for do not expect to be noticed by his family or friends, if you wilfully act against the inclinations of all. You will be censured, slighted, and despised, by every one connected with him. Your alliance will be a disgrace; your name will never even be mentioned by any of us.’

‘These are heavy misfortunes,’ replied Elizabeth. ‘But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extra-

to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly suppose I should neglect them. But, as he required the promise, I could not do less than give it: at least I thought so at the time. The promise, therefore, was given, and must be performed. Something must be done for them whenever they leave Norland and settle in a new home.'

'Well, then, *let* something be done for them; but *that* something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider,' she added, 'that, when the money is once parted with, it never can return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever. If, indeed, it could ever be restored to our poor little boy——'

'Why, to be sure,' said her husband, very gravely, 'that would make a great difference. The time may come when Harry will regret that so large a sum was parted with. If he should have a numerous family, for instance, it would be a very convenient addition.'

'To be sure it would.'

'Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties if the sum were diminished one half.—Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes!'

'Oh! beyond anything great! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if *really* his sisters! And as it is—only half blood!—But you have such a generous spirit!'

'I would not wish to do anything mean,' he replied. 'One had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little. No one, at least, can

think I have not done enough for them: even themselves, they can hardly expect more.'

'There is no knowing what *they* may expect,' said the lady, 'but we are not to think of their expectations: the question is, what you can afford to do.'

'Certainly—and I think I may afford to give them five hundred pounds apiece. As it is, without any addition of mine, they will each have above three thousand pounds on their mother's death—a very comfortable fortune for any young woman.'

'To be sure it is: and, indeed, it strikes me that they can want no addition at all. They will have ten thousand pounds divided amongst them. If they marry, they will be sure of doing well, and if they do not, they may all live very comfortably together on the interest of ten thousand pounds.'

'That is very true, and, therefore, I do not know whether, upon the whole, it would not be more advisable to do something for their mother while she lives rather than for them—something of the annuity kind I mean. My sisters would feel the good effects of it as well as herself. A hundred a year would make them all perfectly comfortable.'

His wife hesitated a little, however, in giving her consent to this plan.

'To be sure,' said she, 'it is better than parting with fifteen hundred pounds at once. But then if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years, we shall be completely taken in.'

'Fifteen years! my dear Fanny; her life cannot be worth half that purchase.'

'Certainly not; but if you observe, people always live for ever when there is any annuity to be paid them; and she is very stout and healthy, and hardly

forty. An annuity is a very serious business; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. You are not aware of what you are doing. I have known a great deal of the trouble of annuities; for my mother was clogged with the payment of three to old superannuated servants by my father's will, and it is amazing how disagreeable she found it. Twice every year these annuities were to be paid; and then there was the trouble of getting it to them; and then one of them was said to have died, and afterwards it turned out to be no such thing. My mother was quite sick of it. Her income was not her own, she said, with such perpetual claims on it; and it was the more unkind in my father, because, otherwise, the money would have been entirely at my mother's disposal, without any restriction whatever. It has given me such an abhorrence of annuities that I am sure I would not pin myself down to the payment of one for all the world.'

'It is certainly an unpleasant thing,' replied Mr. Dashwood, 'to have those kind of yearly drains on one's income. One's fortune, as your mother justly says, is *not* one's own. To be tied down to the regular payment of such a sum, on every rent day, is by no means desirable: it takes away one's independence.'

'Undoubtedly; and after all you have no thanks for it. They think themselves secure, you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all. If I were you, whatever I did should be done at my own discretion entirely. I would not bind myself to allow them anything yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years to spare a

hundred, or even fifty pounds, from our own expenses.'

'I believe you are right, my love; it will be better that there should be no annuity in the case; whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance, because they would only enlarge their style of living if they felt sure of a larger income, and would not be sixpence the richer for it at the end of the year. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds, now and then, will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father.'

'To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your giving them any money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you; for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I'll lay my life that he meant nothing farther; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your mother-in-law and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year apiece, and, of course, they will pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether, they will have five hundred a year amongst them, and what on earth can four women want for more than that? They will live so cheap! their housekeeping will be

nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind! Only conceive how comfortable they will be! Five hundred a year! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it; and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to give *you* something.'

'Upon my word,' said Mr. Dashwood, 'I believe you are perfectly right. My father certainly could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by such acts of assistance and kindness to them as you have described. When my mother removes into another house my services shall be readily given to accommodate her as far as I can. Some little present of furniture too may be acceptable then.'

'Certainly,' returned Mrs. John Dashwood. 'But, however, *one* thing must be considered. When your father and mother moved to Norland, though the furniture of Stanhill¹ was sold, all the china, plate and linen was saved, and is now left to your mother. Her house will therefore be almost completely fitted up as soon as she takes it.'

'That is a material consideration undoubtedly. A valuable legacy indeed! And yet some of the plate would have been a very pleasant addition to our own stock here.'

'Yes; and the set of breakfast china is twice as handsome as what belongs to this house. A great deal too handsome, in my opinion, for any place

¹ Where Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood had lived before they went to Norland Park.

they can ever afford to live in. But, however, so it is. Your father thought only of *them*. And I must say this: that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes, for we very well know that if he could, he would have left almost everything in the world to *them*.'

This argument was irresistible. It gave to his intentions whatever of decision was wanting before; and he finally resolved that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father than such kind of neighbourly acts as his own wife pointed out.

THE NEW HOME

The first part of their journey was performed in too melancholy a disposition to be otherwise than tedious and unpleasant. But as they drew towards the end of it, their interest in the appearance of a country which they were to inhabit overcame their dejection, and a view of Barton Valley as they entered it gave them cheerfulness. It was a pleasant fertile spot, well wooded, and rich in pasture. After winding along it for more than a mile, they reached their own house. A small green court was the whole of its demesne in front; and a neat wicket-gate admitted them into it.

As a house, Barton Cottage, though small, was comfortable and compact; but as a cottage it was defective, for the building was regular, the roof was tiled, the window shutters were not painted green, nor were the walls covered with honeysuckles. A narrow passage led directly through the house into the garden behind. On each side of the entrance was a sitting-room, about sixteen feet square; and

beyond them were the offices and the stairs. Four bedrooms and two garrets formed the rest of the house. It had not been built many years and was in good repair. In comparison of Norland, it was poor and small indeed!—but the tears which recollection called forth as they entered the house were soon dried away. They were cheered by the joy of the servants on their arrival, and each for the sake of the others resolved to appear happy. It was very early in September; the season was fine, and from first seeing the place under the advantage of good weather, they received an impression in its favour which was of material service in recommending it to their lasting approbation.

The situation of the house was good. High hills rose immediately behind, and at no great distance on each side; some of which were open downs, the others cultivated and -woody. The village of Barton was chiefly on one of these hills, and formed a pleasant view from the cottage windows. The prospect in front was more extensive; it commanded the whole of the valley, and reached into the country beyond. The hills which surrounded the cottage terminated the valley in that direction; under another name, and in another course, it branched out again between two of the steepest of them.

With the size and furniture of the house Mrs. Dashwood was upon the whole well satisfied; for though her former style of life rendered many additions to the latter indispensable, yet to add and improve was a delight to her; and she had at this time ready money enough to supply all that was wanted of greater elegance to the apartments. 'As for the house itself, to be sure,' said she, 'it is too

small for our family, but we will make ourselves tolerably comfortable for the present, as it is too late in the year for improvements. Perhaps in the spring, if I have plenty of money, as I dare say I shall, we may think about building. These parlours are both too small for such parties of our friends as I hope to see often collected here; and I have some thoughts of throwing the passage into one of them with perhaps a part of the other, and so leave the remainder of that other for an entrance; this, with a new drawing-room which may be easily added, and a bed-chamber and garret above, will make it a very snug little cottage. I could wish the stairs were handsome. But one must not expect everything; though I suppose it would be no difficult matter to widen them. I shall see how much I am beforehand with the world in the spring, and we will plan our improvements accordingly.'

In the meantime, till all these alterations could be made from the savings of an income of five hundred a year by a woman who never saved in her life, they were wise enough to be contented with the house as it was; and each of them was busy in arranging their particular concerns, and endeavouring, by placing around them their books and other possessions, to form themselves a home. Marianne's pianoforte was unpacked and properly disposed of; and Elinor's drawings were affixed to the walls of their sitting-room.

In such employments as these they were interrupted soon after breakfast the next day by the entrance of their landlord, who called to welcome them to Barton, and to offer them every accommodation from his own house and garden in which

theirs might at present be deficient. Sir John Middleton was a good-looking man about forty. He had formerly visited at Stanhill, but it was too long ago for his young cousins to remember him. His countenance was thoroughly good-humoured; and his manners were as friendly as the style of his letter. Their arrival seemed to afford him real satisfaction, and their comfort to be an object of real solicitude to him. He said much of his earnest desire of their living in the most sociable terms with his family, and pressed them so cordially to dine at Barton Park every day, till they were better settled at home, that, though his entreaties were carried to a point of perseverance beyond civility, they could not give offence. His kindness was not confined to words; for within an hour after he left them, a large basket full of garden stuff and fruit arrived from the park, which was followed before the end of the day by a present of game. He insisted, moreover, on conveying all their letters to and from the post for them, and would not be denied the satisfaction of sending them his newspaper every day.

A ROMANTIC YOUNG LADY

Mrs. Jennings was a widow, with an ample jointure. She had only two daughters, both of whom she had lived to see respectably married, and she had now therefore nothing to do but to marry all the rest of the world. In the promotion of this object she was zealously active, as far as her ability reached; and missed no opportunity of projecting weddings among all the young people of her acquaintance. She was remarkably quick in the

discovery of attachments, and had enjoyed the advantage of raising the blushes and the vanity of many a young lady by insinuations of her power over such a young man; and this kind of discernment enabled her, soon after her arrival at Barton, decisively to pronounce that Colonel Brandon was very much in love with Marianne Dashwood. She rather suspected it to be so, on the very first evening of their being together, from his listening so attentively while she sang to them; and when the visit was returned by the Middletons' dining at the cottage, the fact was ascertained by his listening to her again. It must be so. She was perfectly convinced of it. It would be an excellent match, for he was rich and she was handsome. Mrs. Jennings had been anxious to see Colonel Brandon well married, ever since her connection with Sir John first brought him to her knowledge; and she was always anxious to get a good husband for every pretty girl.

The immediate advantage to herself was by no means inconsiderable, for it supplied her with endless jokes against them both. At the park she laughed at the colonel, and in the cottage at Marianne. To the former her raillery was probably, as far as it regarded only himself, perfectly indifferent; but to the latter it was at first incomprehensible; and when its object was understood, she hardly knew whether most to laugh at its absurdity, or censure its impertinence, for she considered it as an unfeeling reflection on the colonel's advanced years, and on his forlorn condition as an old bachelor.

Mrs. Dashwood, who could not think a man five years younger than herself so exceedingly

ancient as he appeared to the youthful fancy of her daughter, ventured to clear Mrs. Jennings from the probability of wishing to throw ridicule on his age.

'But at least, mamma, you cannot deny the absurdity of the accusation, though you may not think it intentionally ill-natured. Colonel Brandon is certainly younger than Mrs. Jennings, but he is old enough to be ~~my father~~; and if he were ever animated enough to be in love, must have long outlived every sensation of the kind. It is too ridiculous! When is a man to be safe from such wit, if age and infirmity will not protect him?'

'Infirmity!' said Elinor, 'do you call Colonel Brandon infirm? I can easily suppose that his age may appear much greater to you than to my mother; but you can hardly deceive yourself as to his having the use of his limbs!'

'Did not you hear him complain of the rheumatism? and is not that the commonest infirmity of declining life?'

'My dearest child,' said her mother, laughing, 'at this rate you must be in continual terror of *my* decay; and it must seem to you a miracle that my life has been extended to the advanced age of forty.'

'Mamma, you are not doing me justice. I know very well that Colonel Brandon is not old enough to make his friends yet apprehensive of losing him in the course of nature. He may live twenty years longer. But thirty-five has nothing to do with matrimony.'

'Perhaps,' said Elinor, 'thirty-five and seventeen had better not have anything to do with matrimony together. But if there should by any chance happen to be a woman who is single at seven and

twenty, I should not think Colonel Brandon's being thirty-five any objection to his marrying *her*.'

'A woman of seven and twenty,' said Marianne, after pausing a moment, 'can never hope to feel or inspire affection again, and if her home be uncomfortable, or her fortune small, I can suppose that she might bring herself to submit to the offices of a nurse, for the sake of the provision and security of a wife. In his marrying such a woman, therefore, there would be nothing unsuitable. It would be a compact of convenience, and the world would be satisfied. In my eyes it would be no marriage at all, but that would be nothing. To me it would seem only a commercial exchange, in which each wished to be benefited at the expense of the other.'

'It would be impossible, I know,' replied Elinor, 'to convince you that a woman of seven and twenty could feel for a man of thirty-five anything near enough to love, to make him a desirable companion to her. But I must object to your dooming Colonel Brandon and his wife to the constant confinement of a sick chamber, merely because he chanced to complain yesterday (a very cold damp day) of a slight rheumatic feel in one of his shoulders.'

'But he talked of flannel waistcoats,' said Marianne; 'and with me a flannel waistcoat is invariably connected with aches, cramps, rheumatisms and every species of ailment that can afflict the old and the feeble.'

'Had he been only in a violent fever, you would not have despised him half so much. Confess, Marianne, is not there something interesting to you in the flushed cheek, hollow eye, and quick pulse of a fever?'

VISITORS

. . . as Elinor sat at her drawing-table, she was roused one morning, soon after Edward's leaving them, by the arrival of company. She happened to be quite alone. The closing of the little gate, at the entrance of the green court in front of the house, drew her eyes to the window, and she saw a large party walking up to the door. Amongst them were Sir John and Lady Middleton and Mrs. Jennings, but there were two others, a gentleman and lady, who were quite unknown to her. She was sitting near the window, and as soon as Sir John perceived her, he left the rest of the party to the ceremony of knocking at the door, and stepping across the turf, obliged her to open the casement to speak to him, though the space was so short between the door and the window, as to make it hardly possible to speak at one without being heard at the other.

'Well,' said he, 'we have brought you some strangers. How do you like them?'

'Hush! they will hear you.'

'Never mind if they do. It is only the Palmers. Charlotte is very pretty, I can tell you. You may see her if you look this way.'

As Elinor was certain of seeing her in a couple of minutes, without taking that liberty, she begged to be excused.

'Where is Marianne? Has she run away because we are come? I see her instrument is open.'

'She is walking, I believe.'

They were now joined by Mrs. Jennings, who had not patience enough to wait till the door was

opened before she told *her* story. She came hallooing to the window, 'How do you do, my dear? How does Mrs. Dashwood do? And where are your sisters? What! all alone! you will be glad of a little company to sit with you. I have brought my other son and daughter to see you. Only think of their coming so suddenly! I thought I heard a carriage last night, while we were drinking our tea, but it never entered my head that it could be them. I thought of nothing but whether it might not be Colonel Brandon come back again; so I said to Sir John, I do think I hear a carriage; perhaps it is Colonel Brandon come back again——'

Elinor was obliged to turn from her, in the middle of her story, to receive the rest of the party. Lady Middleton introduced the two strangers; Mrs. Dashwood and Margaret came downstairs at the same time, and they all sat down to look at one another, while Mrs. Jennings continued her story as she walked through the passage into the parlour, attended by Sir John.

Mrs. Palmer was several years younger than Lady Middleton, and totally unlike her in every respect. She was short and plump, had a pretty face, and the finest expression of good-humour in it that could possibly be. Her manners were by no means so elegant as her sister's, but they were much more prepossessing. She came in with a smile, smiled all the time of her visit, except when she laughed, and smiled when she went away. Her husband was a grave-looking young man of five or six and twenty, with an air of more fashion and sense than his wife, but of less willingness to please or be pleased. He entered the room with a look of self-

consequence, slightly bowed to the ladies, without speaking a word, and, after briefly surveying them and their apartments, took up a newspaper from the table and continued to read it as long as he stayed.

Mrs. Palmer, on the contrary, who was strongly endowed by nature with a turn for being uniformly civil and happy, was hardly seated before her admiration of the parlour and everything in it burst forth.

'Well! what a delightful room this is! I never saw anything so charming! Only think, mamma, how it is improved since I was here last! I always thought it such a sweet place, ma'am!' (turning to Mrs. Dashwood) 'but you have made it so charming! Only look, sister, how delightful everything is! How I should like such a house for myself! Should not you, Mr. Palmer?'

Mr. Palmer made her no answer, and did not even raise his eyes from the newspaper.

'Mr. Palmer does not hear me,' said she, laughing, 'he never does sometimes. It is so ridiculous!

This was quite a new idea to Mrs. Dashwood; she had never been used to find wit in the inattention of any one, and could not help looking with surprise at them both.

Mrs. Jennings, in the meantime, talked on as loud as she could, and continued her account of their surprise, the evening before, on seeing their friends, without ceasing till everything was told. Mrs. Palmer laughed heartily at the recollection of their astonishment, and everybody agreed, two or three times over, that it had been quite an agreeable surprise.

'You may believe how glad we all were to see them,' added Mrs. Jennings, leaning forward

towards Elinor, and speaking in a low voice as if she meant to be heard by no one else, though they were seated on different sides of the room; 'but, however, I can't help wishing they had not travelled quite so fast, nor made such a long journey of it, for they came all round by London upon account of some business. I wanted her to stay at home and rest this morning, but she would come with us; she longed so much to see you all!'

Mrs. Palmer laughed, and said it would not do her any harm.

Lady Middleton (here) exerted herself to ask Mr. Palmer if there were any news in the paper.

'No, none at all,' he replied, and read on.

'Here comes Marianne,' cried Sir John. 'Now, Palmer, you shall see a monstrous pretty girl.'

He immediately went into the passage, opened the front door, and ushered her in himself. Mrs. Jennings asked her, as soon as she appeared, if she had not been to Allenham¹; and Mrs. Palmer laughed so heartily at the question, as to show she understood it. Mr. Palmer looked up on her entering the room, stared at her some minutes, and then returned to his newspaper. Mrs. Palmer's eye was now caught by the drawings which hung round the room. She got up to examine them.

'Oh! dear, how beautiful these are! Well! how delightful! Do but look, mamma, how sweet! I declare they are quite charming; I could look at them for ever.' And then, sitting down again, she very soon forgot that there were any such things in the room.

When Lady Middleton rose to go away, Mr.

¹ Where John Willoughby was staying.

Palmer rose also, laid down the newspaper, stretched himself, and looked at them all round.

'My love, have you been asleep?' said his wife, laughing.

He made her no answer; and only observed, after again examining the room, that it was very low pitched, and that the ceiling was crooked. He then made his bow and departed with the rest.

Sir John had been very urgent with them all to spend the next day at the park. Mrs. Dashwood, who did not choose to dine with them oftener than they dined at the cottage, absolutely refused on her own account; her daughters might do as they pleased. But they had no curiosity to see how Mr. and Mrs. Palmer ate their dinner, and no expectation of pleasure from them in any other way. They attempted, therefore, likewise to excuse themselves; the weather was uncertain and not likely to be good. But Sir John would not be satisfied—the carriage should be sent for them and they must come. Lady Middleton, too, though she did not press their mother, pressed them. Mrs. Jennings and Mrs. Palmer joined their entreaties, all seemed equally anxious to avoid a family party; and the young ladies were obliged to yield.

'Why should they ask us?' said Marianne, as soon as they were gone. 'The rent of this cottage is said to be low; but we have it on very hard terms, if we are to dine at the park whenever any one is staying either with them, or with us.'

A CURE FOR LOVE—AND THE CHOLICKY GOUT

Elinor, who did justice to Mrs. Jennings's kindness, though its effusions were often distressing,

and sometimes almost ridiculous, made her those acknowledgments, and returned her those civilities, which her sister could not make or return for herself. Their good friend saw that Marianne was unhappy, and felt that everything was due to her which might make her at all less so. She treated her, therefore, with all the indulgent fondness of a parent towards a favourite child on the last day of its holidays. Marianne was to have the best place by the fire, was to be tempted to eat by every delicacy in the house, and to be amused by the relation of all the news of the day. Had not Elinor, in the sad countenance of her sister, seen a check to all mirth, she could have been entertained by Mrs. Jennings's endeavours to cure a disappointment in love, by a variety of sweetmeats and olives, and a good fire. As soon, however, as the consciousness of all this was forced by continual repetition on Marianne, she could stay no longer. With an hasty exclamation of misery, and a sign to her sister not to follow her, she directly got up and hurried out of the room.

'Poor soul!' cried Mrs. Jennings, as soon as she was gone, 'how it grieves me to see her! And I declare if she is not gone away without finishing her wine! And the dried cherries too! Lord! nothing seems to do her any good. I am sure, if I knew of anything she would like, I would send all over the town for it. Well, it is the oddest thing to me that a man should use such a pretty girl so ill! But when there is plenty of money on one side, and next to none on the other, Lord bless you! they care no more about such things!'

'The lady then—Miss Grey I think you called her—is very rich?'

A Cure for Love and Gou

'Fifty thousand pounds, my dear. Did you ever see her? a smart, stylish girl they say, but not handsome. I remember her aunt very well, Biddy Henshawe; she married a very wealthy man. But the family are all rich together. Fifty thousand pounds! and by all accounts it won't come before it's wanted; for they say he is all to pieces. No wonder! dashing about with his curricule¹ and hunters! Well, it don't signify talking, but when a young man, be he who he will, comes and makes love to a pretty girl, and promises marriage, he has no business to fly off from his word only because he grows poor, and a richer girl is ready to have him. Why don't he, in such a case, sell his horses, let his house, turn off his servants, and make a thorough reform at once? I warrant you, Miss Marianne would have been ready to wait till matters came round. But that won't do, nowadays; nothing in the way of pleasure can ever be given up by the young men of this age.'

'Do you know what kind of a girl Miss Grey is? Is she said to be amiable?'

'I never heard any harm of her; indeed I hardly ever heard her mentioned; except that Mrs. Taylor did say this morning, that one day Miss Walker hinted to her that she believed Mr. and Mrs. Ellison would not be sorry to have Miss Grey married, for she and Mrs. Ellison could never agree.'

'And who are the Ellisons?'

'Her guardians, my dear. But now she is of age and may choose for herself; and a pretty choice she has made! What now' (after pausing a moment)

¹ A light, two-wheeled carriage usually drawn by two horses abreast.

'your poor sister is gone to her own room, I suppose to moan by herself. Is there nothing one can get to comfort her? Poor dear, it seems quite cruel to let her be alone. Well, by and by we shall have a few friends, and that will amuse her a little. What shall we play at? She hates whist, I know; but is there no round game she cares for?'

'Dear ma'am, this kindness is quite unnecessary. Marianne, I dare say, will not leave her room again this evening. I shall persuade her, if I can, to go early to bed, for I am sure she wants rest.'

'Aye, I believe that will be best for her. Let her name her own supper, and go to bed. Lord! no wonder she has been looking so bad and so cast down this last week or two, for this matter I suppose has been hanging over her head as long as that. And so the letter that came to-day finished it! Poor soul! I am sure, if I had had a notion of it, I would not have joked her about it for all my money. But then, you know, how should I guess such a thing? I made sure of its being nothing but a common love-letter, and you know young people like to be laughed at about them. Lord! how concerned Sir John and my daughters will be when they hear it! If I had had my senses about me I might have called in Conduit Street in my way home, and told them of it. But I shall see them to-morrow.'

'It would be unnecessary, I am sure, for you to caution Mrs. Palmer and Sir John against ever naming Mr. Willoughby, or making the slightest allusion to what has passed, before my sister. Their own good nature must point out to them the real cruelty of appearing to know anything about it when she is present; and the less that may ever be said to

myself on the subject, the more my feelings will be spared, as you, my dear madam, will easily believe.'

'Oh! Lord! yes, that I do indeed. It must be terrible for you to hear it talked of; and as for your sister, I am sure I would not mention a word about it to her for the world. You saw I did not all dinner-time. No more would Sir John nor my daughters, for they are all very thoughtful and considerate; especially if I give them a hint, as I certainly will. For my part, I think the less that is said about such things the better, the sooner 'tis blown over and forgot. And what good does talking ever do, you know?'

'In this affair it can only do harm; more so perhaps than in many cases of a similar kind, for it has been attended by circumstances which, for the sake of every one concerned in it, make it unfit to become the public conversation. I must do *this* justice to Mr. Willoughby—he has broken no positive engagement with my sister.'

'Law, my dear! Don't pretend to defend him. No positive engagement indeed! after taking her all over Allenham House, and fixing on the very rooms they were to live in hereafter!'

Elinor, for her sister's sake, could not press the subject farther, and she hoped it was not required of her for Willoughby's; since, though Marianne might lose much, he could gain very little by the inforcement of the real truth. After a short silence on both sides, Mrs. Jennings, with all her natural hilarity, burst forth again.

'Well, my dear, 'tis a true saying about an ill wind, for it will be all the better for Colonel Brandon. He will have her at last; aye, that he will. Mind

me, now, if they an't married by Midsummer. Lord! how he'll chuckle over this news! I hope he will come to-night. It will be all to one a better match for your sister. Two thousand a year without debt or drawback. Delaford is a nice place, I can tell you; exactly what I call a nice old-fashioned place, full of comforts and conveniences; quite shut in with great garden walls that are covered with the best fruit-trees in the country; and such a mulberry-tree in one corner! Lord! how Charlotte and I did stuff the only time we were there! Then, there is a dove-cote, some delightful stewponds,¹ and a very pretty canal; and everything, in short, that one could wish for: and, moreover, it is close to the church, and only a quarter of a mile from the turnpike-road,² so 'tis never dull, for if you only go and sit up in an old yew arbour behind the house, you may see all the carriages that pass along. Oh! 'tis a nice place! A butcher, hard by in the village, and the parsonage-house within a stone's throw. To my fancy, a thousand times prettier than Barton Park, where they are forced to send three miles for their meat, and have not a neighbour nearer than your mother. Well, I shall spirit up the Colonel as soon as I can. One shoulder of mutton, you know, drives another down. If we *can* but put Willoughby out of her head!

'Aye, if we *can* but do that, ma'am,' said Elinor, 'we shall do very well with or without Colonel Brandon.'

¹ Fish ponds.

² So called because of the turnpikes, or barriers, placed across the road to prevent the passage of traffic until the toll (levied for the upkeep of the road) had been paid.

And then rising, she went away to join Marianne, whom she found, as she expected, in her own room, leaning, in silent misery, over the small remains of a fire, which, till Elinor's entrance, had been her only light.

'You had better leave me,' was all the notice that her sister received from her.

'I will leave you,' said Elinor, 'if you will go to bed.'

But this, from the momentary perverseness of impatient suffering, she at first refused to do. Her sister's earnest, though gentle persuasion, however, soon softened her to compliance, and Elinor saw her lay her aching head on the pillow, and saw her, as she hoped, in a way to get some quiet rest before she left her.

In the drawing-room, whither she then repaired, she was soon joined by Mrs. Jennings, with a wine-glass, full of something, in her hand.

'My dear,' said she, entering, 'I have just recollected that I have some of the finest old Constantia wine in the house that ever was tasted, so I have brought a glass of it for your sister. My poor husband! how fond he was of it! Whenever he had a touch of his old cholicky gout, he said it did him more good than anything else in the world. Do take it to your sister.'

'Dear ma'am,' replied Elinor, smiling at the difference of the complaints for which it was recommended, 'how good you are! But I have just left Marianne in bed, and, I hope, almost asleep; and as I think nothing will be of so much service to her as rest, if you will give me leave, I will drink the wine myself.'

Mrs. Jennings, though regretting that she had not been five minutes earlier, was satisfied with the compromise; and Elinor, as she swallowed the chief of it, reflected that, though its good effects on a cholicky gout were, at present, of little importance to her, its healing powers on a disappointed heart might be as reasonably tried on herself as on her sister.

MRS. FERRARS ESCAPES THE REPROACH OF BEING
TOO AMIABLE

After a proper resistance on the part of Mrs. Ferrars, just so violent and so steady as to preserve her from that reproach which she always seemed fearful of incurring, the reproach of being too amiable, Edward was admitted to her presence, and pronounced to be again her son.

Her family had of late been exceedingly fluctuating. For many years of her life she had had two sons; but the crime and annihilation of Edward a few weeks ago had robbed her of one; the similar annihilation of Robert had left her for a fortnight without any; and now, by the resuscitation of Edward, she had one again.

In spite of his being allowed once more to live, however, he did not feel the continuance of his existence secure, till he had revealed his present engagement; for the publication of that circumstance, he feared, might give a sudden turn to his constitution, and carry him off as rapidly as before. With apprehensive caution, therefore, it was revealed, and he was listened to with unexpected calmness. Mrs. Ferrars at first reasonably endeavoured to dissuade him from marrying Miss Dashwood, by

every argument in her power—told him that in Miss Morton he would have a woman of higher rank and larger fortune, and enforced the assertion, by observing that Miss Morton was the daughter of a nobleman with thirty thousand pounds, while Miss Dashwood was only the daughter of a private gentleman with no more than *three*; but when she found that, though perfectly admitting the truth of her representation, he was by no means inclined to be guided by it, she judged it wisest, from the experience of the past, to submit, and therefore, after such an ungracious delay as she owed to her own dignity, and as served to prevent every suspicion of goodwill, she issued her decree of consent to the marriage of Edward and Elinor.

What she would engage to do towards augmenting their income was next to be considered; and here it plainly appeared that, though Edward was now her only son, he was by no means her eldest; for while Robert was inevitably endowed with a thousand pounds a year, not the smallest objection was made against Edward's taking orders for the sake of two hundred and fifty at the utmost; nor was anything promised either for the present or in future, beyond the ten thousand pounds, which had been given with Fanny.

It was as much, however, as was desired, and more than was expected by Edward and Elinor; and Mrs. Ferrars herself, by her shuffling excuses, seemed the only person surprised by her not giving more.

With an income quite sufficient to their wants thus secured to them, they had nothing to wait for after Edward was in possession of the living, but

the readiness of the house, to which Colonel Brandon, with an eager desire for the accommodation of Elinor, was making considerable improvements; and after waiting some time for their completion, after experiencing, as usual, a thousand disappointments and delays, from the unaccountable dilatoriness of the workmen, Elinor, as usual, broke through the first positive resolution of not marrying till everything was ready, and the ceremony took place in Barton church early in the autumn.

The first month after their marriage was spent with their friend¹ at the Mansion-house, from whence they could superintend the progress of the Parsonage, and direct everything as they liked on the spot—could choose papers, project shrubberies, and invent a sweep. Mrs. Jennings's prophecies, though rather jumbled together, were chiefly fulfilled; for she was able to visit Edward and his wife in their Parsonage by Michaelmas, and she found in Elinor and her husband, as she really believed, one of the happiest couples in the world. They had, in fact, nothing to wish for but the marriage of Colonel Brandon and Marianne, and rather better pasturage for their cows.

THE FATE OF A ROMANTIC YOUNG LADY

Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen, and with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give

¹ Colonel Brandon, who had presented Edward to the living.

her hand to another!—and *that* other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment, whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married—and who still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat!

But so it was. Instead of falling a sacrifice to an irresistible passion, as once she had fondly flattered herself with expecting—instead of remaining even for ever with her mother, and finding her only pleasure in retirement and study, as afterwards in her more calm and sober judgment she had determined on—she found herself, at nineteen, submitting to new attachments, entering on new duties, placed in a new home, a wife, the mistress of a family, and the patroness of a village.

Colonel Brandon was now as happy as all those who best loved him believed he deserved to be; in Marianne he was consoled for every past affliction; her regard and her society restored his mind to animation, and his spirits to cheerfulness; and that Marianne found her own happiness in forming his was equally the persuasion and delight of each observing friend. Marianne could never love by halves; and her whole heart became, in time, as much devoted to her husband as it had once been to Willoughby.

NORTHANGER ABBEY

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

THE REV. RICHARD MORLAND, of Fullerton, Wiltshire.

MRS. MORLAND, his wife.

JAMES, their son.

CATHERINE, their daughter.

MR. ALLEN, of Fullerton.

MRS. ALLEN, his wife.

MRS. THORPE, a widow, of Putney.

ISABELLA, her daughter.

GENERAL TILNEY, of Northanger Abbey, Gloucestershire.

CAPTAIN FREDERICK TILNEY } his sons.

THE REV. HENRY TILNEY }

ELEANOR, his daughter.

THE STORY

‘No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be an heroine.’ She was the daughter of a clergyman and the fourth in a family of ten. She was neither particularly beautiful nor particularly clever. Until she was fifteen, she preferred ‘cricket, base-ball, riding on horse-back, and running about the country to books.’ But at fifteen she changed. She began to read, and by the time she was seventeen she loved nothing better than tales of mystery and horror.

But a heroine should meet with adventures. Fortunately for Catherine, Mr. Allen, a rich neighbour, had a gouty constitution which sent him to take the waters at Bath. His wife accompanied him, and took Catherine with her; and there, in the Lower Rooms, Catherine encountered a young man fit to play hero to her heroine—Mr. Henry Tilney (see page 106).

Henry Tilney was a clergyman, with an odious father, General Tilney (whose home was Northanger Abbey in Gloucestershire),

a brother, Captain Tilney ('a very fashionable-looking, handsome young man'), and a sister, Eleanor ('a girl of good sense and good breeding'). A few days in Bath were enough to turn Catherine into a real heroine, in love with Henry Tilney.

Meanwhile Mrs. Allen had been renewing acquaintance with an old friend, Mrs. Thorpe, who was also staying in Bath, with her daughters. A rapid and violent friendship sprang up between Catherine and Isabella Thorpe, a vulgar, empty-headed girl with whom Catherine had nothing in common save a taste for reading romances.

They 'were always arm in arm when they walked, pinned up each other's train for the dance,' and upon rainy days shut themselves up to read novels together (see page 112). Isabella's real interest was not in Catherine but in Catherine's brother, James Morland, who for the moment held her easily given affection.

Henry and Eleanor Tilney showed Catherine true friendship. General Tilney, too, made much of her, and invited her to Northanger Abbey. Thrilled by the very word *abbey*, she set off in the General's chaise and four, 'with postilions handsomely liveried and numerous outriders.' But the best part of the journey came when she exchanged the chaise for a seat in Henry's curricule and talked with him of the mysteries Northanger Abbey might have in store for her (see page 115).

Arrived at the Abbey, she was disappointed to find that her bedroom was 'by no means unreasonably large and contained neither tapestry nor velvet.' But there was in it 'a high, old-fashioned black cabinet,' just the sort of thing that should hold some mysterious document (see page 122).

Disappointed there, she looked about her for other dark and dreadful secrets. General Tilney she saw as the villain of the story, who must, she felt, have imprisoned his wife in some remote room of the Abbey. Henry cured her of these fancies, and she had to admit that an Abbey may be no more romantic than a cottage. Her romantic mind received a further shock when she learned that her dear friend Isabella Thorpe, though engaged to James Morland, had eloped with Captain Tilney. Only General Tilney lived up to the character she had given him. He had no wife shut up in the Abbey, but he did not hesitate to turn Catherine out of his house when he discovered she was not the heiress he had thought her.

Like the angry father in one of Catherine's favourite romances,

he ordered Henry to think no more of her. Henry, however, acted as a hero should: he followed Catherine to her home, and 'within twelve months of the first day of their meeting' they were married.

A HEROINE FINDS HER HERO

Every morning now brought its regular duties; shops were to be visited, some new part of the town to be looked at, and the Pump-room¹ to be attended, where they paraded up and down for an hour, looking at everybody and speaking to no one. The wish of a numerous acquaintance in Bath was still uppermost with Mrs. Allen, and she repeated it after every fresh proof, which every morning brought, of her knowing nobody at all.

They made their appearance in the Lower Rooms²; and here fortune was more favourable to our heroine. The master of the ceremonies introduced to her a very gentleman-like young man as a partner; his name was Tilney. He seemed to be about four or five and twenty, was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very intelligent and lively eye, and, if not quite handsome, was very near it. His address was good, and Catherine felt herself in high luck. There was little leisure for speaking while they danced; but when they were seated at tea she found him as agreeable as she had already given him credit for being. He talked with fluency and spirit, and there was an archness and pleasantry in his manner which interested, though it was hardly understood by her. After chatting some time on such matters as naturally arose from the objects

¹ Where people went to drink the waters.

² The Assembly, or Lower, Rooms, where balls were held.

around them, he suddenly addressed her with—‘I have hitherto been very remiss, madam, in the proper attentions of a partner here; I have not yet asked you how long you have been in Bath, whether you were ever here before, whether you have been at the Upper Rooms, the theatre, and the concert, and how you like the place altogether. I have been very negligent; but are you now at leisure to satisfy me in these particulars? If you are, I will begin directly.’

‘You need not give yourself that trouble, sir.’

‘No trouble, I assure you, madam.’ Then forming his features into a set smile, and affectedly softening his voice, he added, with a simpering air, ‘Have you been long in Bath, madam?’

‘About a week, sir,’ replied Catherine, trying not to laugh.

‘Really!’ with affected astonishment.

‘Why should you be surprised, sir?’

‘Why, indeed?’ said he, in his natural tone. ‘But some emotion must appear to be raised by your reply, and surprise is more easily assumed, and not less reasonable than any other.—Now let us go on. Were you never here before, madam?’

‘Never, sir.’

‘Indeed! Have you yet honoured the Upper Room?’

‘Yes, sir, I was there last Monday.’

‘Have you been to the theatre?’

‘Yes, sir, I was at the play on Tuesday.’

‘To the concert?’

‘Yes, sir, on Wednesday.’

‘And are you altogether pleased with Bath?’

‘Yes; I like it very well.’

'Now I must give one smirk, and then we may be rational again.'

Catherine turned away her head, not knowing whether she might venture to laugh.

'I see what you think of me,' said he gravely; 'I shall make but a poor figure in your journal to-morrow.'

'My journal!'

'Yes, I know exactly what you will say. Friday, went to the Lower Rooms; wore my sprigged¹ muslin robe with blue trimmings, plain black shoes; appeared to much advantage, but was strangely harassed by a queer, half-witted man, who would make me dance with him, and distressed me by his nonsense.'

'Indeed I shall say no such thing.'

'Shall I tell you what you ought to say?'

'If you please.'

'I danced with a very agreeable young man, introduced by Mr. King; had a great deal of conversation with him; seems a most extraordinary genius; hope I may know more of him. *That*, madam, is what I *wish* you to say.'

'But, perhaps, I keep no journal.'

'Perhaps you are not sitting in this room, and I am not sitting by you. These are points in which a doubt is equally possible. Not keep a journal! How are your absent cousins to understand the tenour of your life in Bath without one? How are the civilities and compliments of every day to be related as they ought to be, unless noted down every evening in a journal? How are your various dresses to be remembered, and the particular state

¹ Patterned with sprigs of flowers.

of your complexion, and curl of your hair to be described in all their diversities, without having constant recourse to a journal? My dear madam, I am not so ignorant of young ladies' ways as you wish to believe me; it is this delightful habit of journalizing which largely contributes to form the easy style of writing for which ladies are so generally celebrated. Everybody allows that the talent of writing agreeable letters is peculiarly female. Nature may have done something, but I am sure it must be essentially assisted by the practice of keeping a journal.'

'I have sometimes thought,' said Catherine, doubtingly, 'whether ladies *do* write so much better letters than gentlemen! That is, I should not think the superiority was always on our side.'

'As far as I have had opportunity of judging, it appears to me that the usual style of letter-writing among women is faultless, except in three particulars.'

'And what are they?'

'A general deficiency of subject, a total inattention to stops, and a very frequent ignorance of grammar.'

'Upon my word! I need not have been afraid of disclaiming the compliment. You do not think too highly of us in that way.'

'I should no more lay it down as a general rule that women write better letters than men, than that they sing better duets, or draw better landscapes. In every power, of which taste is the foundation, excellence is pretty fairly divided between the sexes.'

They were interrupted by Mrs. Allen. 'My dear Catherine,' said she, 'do take this pin out of my

sleeve. I am afraid it has torn a hole already. I shall be quite sorry if it has, for this is a favourite gown, though it cost but nine shillings a yard.'

'That is exactly what I should have guessed it, madam,' said Mr. Tilney, looking at the muslin.

'Do you understand muslins, sir?'

'Particularly well; I always buy my own cravats, and am allowed to be an excellent judge; and my sister has often trusted me in the choice of a gown. I bought one for her the other day, and it was pronounced to be a prodigious bargain by every lady who saw it. I gave but five shillings a yard for it, and a true Indian muslin.'

Mrs. Allen was quite struck by his genius. 'Men commonly take so little notice of those things,' said she: 'I can never get Mr. Allen to know one of my gowns from another. You must be a great comfort to your sister, sir.'

'I hope I am, madam.'

'And pray, sir, what do you think of Miss Morland's gown?'

'It is very pretty, madam,' said he, gravely examining it; 'but I do not think it will wash well; I am afraid it will fray.'

'How can you,' said Catherine, laughing, 'be so——?' She had almost said 'strange.'

'I am quite of your opinion, sir,' replied Mrs. Allen; 'and so I told Miss Morland when she bought it.'

'But then you know, madam, muslin always turns to some account or other; Miss Morland will get enough out of it for a handkerchief, or a cap, or a cloak. Muslin can never be said to be wasted. I have heard my sister say so forty times, when she

has been extravagant in buying more than she wanted, or careless in cutting it to pieces.'

'Bath is a charming place, sir; there are so many good shops here. We are sadly off in the country: not but that we have very good shops in Salisbury, but it is so far to go—eight miles is a long way. Mr. Allen says it is nine, measured nine; but I am sure it cannot be more than eight; and it is such a fag; I come back tired to death. Now, here one can step out of doors and get a thing in five minutes.'

Mr. Tilney was polite enough to seem interested in what she said; and she kept him on the subject of muslins till the dancing recommenced. Catherine feared, as she listened to their discourse, that he indulged himself a little too much with the foibles of others. 'What are you thinking of so earnestly?' said he, as they walked back to the ball-room; 'not of your partner, I hope, for, by that shake of the head, your meditations are not satisfactory.'

Catherine coloured, and said, 'I was not thinking of anything.'

'That is artful and deep, to be sure; but I had rather be told at once that you will not tell me.'

'Well then, I will not.'

'Thank you; for now we shall soon be acquainted, as I am authorized to tease you on this subject whenever we meet, and nothing in the world advances intimacy so much.'

HORRID MYSTERIES

The following conversation, which took place between the two friends in the Pump-room one morning, after an acquaintance of eight or nine days, is given as a specimen of their very warm

attachment, and of the delicacy, discretion, originality of thought, and literary taste which marked the reasonableness of that attachment.

They met by appointment; and as Isabella had arrived nearly five minutes before her friend, her first address naturally was: 'My dearest creature, what can have made you so late? I have been waiting for you at least this age!'

'Have you, indeed? I am very sorry for it; but really I thought I was in very good time. It is but just one. I hope you have not been here long?'

'Oh! these ten ages at least. I am sure I have been here this half-hour. But now, let us go and sit down at the other end of the room, and enjoy ourselves. I have an hundred things to say to you. In the first place, I was so afraid it would rain this morning, just as I wanted to set off; it looked very showery, and that would have thrown me into agonies! Do you know I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine, in a shop window in Milsom Street just now; very like yours, only with coquelicot¹ ribbons instead of green; I quite longed for it. But, my dearest Catherine, what have you been doing with yourself all this morning? Have you gone on with *Udolpho*?²

'Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke; and I am got to the black veil.'

'Are you, indeed? How delightful! Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world! Are not you wild to know?'

'Oh! yes, quite; what can it be? But do not tell me: I would not be told upon any account. I

¹ Poppy-coloured.

² *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, by Mrs. Radcliffe (1764-1823).

know it must be a skeleton. I am sure it is Laurentina's skeleton. Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it. I assure you, if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all the world.'

'Dear creature! how much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished *Udolpho*, we will read *The Italian*¹ together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you.'

'Have you, indeed! How glad I am!—What are they all?'

'I will read you their names directly; here they are in my pocket-book. *Castle of Wolfenbach*, *Cleremont*, *Mysterious Warnings*, *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, *Midnight Bell*, *Orphan of the Rhine*, and *Horrid Mysteries*. Those will last us some time.'

'Yes, pretty well; but are they all horrid, are you sure they are all horrid?'

'Yes, quite sure; for a particular friend of mine, a Miss Andrews, a sweet girl, one of the sweetest creatures in the world, has read every one of them. I wish you knew Miss Andrews, you would be delighted with her. She is netting herself the sweetest cloak you can conceive. I think her as beautiful as an angel, and I am so vexed with the men for not admiring her! I scold them all amazingly about it.'

'Scold them! Do you scold them for not admiring her?'

'Yes, that I do. There is nothing I would not do for those who are really my friends. I have no notion of loving people by halves; it is not my

¹ By the same author.

nature. My attachments are always excessively strong. I told Captain Hunt, at one of our assemblies this winter, that if he was to tease me all night, I would not dance with him, unless he would allow Miss Andrews to be as beautiful as an angel. The men think us incapable of real friendship you know, and I am determined to show them the difference. Now, if I were to hear anybody speak slightly of you, I should fire up in a moment: but that is not at all likely, for *you* are just the kind of girl to be a great favourite with the men.'

'Oh! dear,' cried Catherine, colouring, 'how can you say so?'

'I know you very well; you have so much animation, which is exactly what Miss Andrews wants; for I must confess there is something amazingly insipid about her. Oh! I must tell you that, just after we parted yesterday, I saw a young man looking at you so earnestly; I am sure he is in love with you.' Catherine coloured, and disclaimed again. Isabella laughed. 'It is very true, upon my honour, but I see how it is; you are indifferent to everybody's admiration, except that of one gentleman, who shall be nameless. Nay, I cannot blame you' (speaking more seriously)—'your feelings are easily understood. Where the heart is really attached, I know very well how little one can be pleased with the attention of anybody else. Everything is so insipid, so uninteresting, that does not relate to the beloved object! I can perfectly comprehend your feelings.'

'But you should not persuade me that I think so very much about Mr. Tilney, for perhaps I may never see him again.'

. 'Not see him again! My dearest creature, do not talk of it. I am sure you would be miserable if you thought so.'

'No, indeed, I should not. I do not pretend to say that I was not very much pleased with him; but while I have *Udolpho* to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh! the dreadful black veil! My dear Isabella, I am sure there must be Laurentina's skeleton behind it.'

'It is so odd to me that you should never have read *Udolpho* before; but I suppose Mrs. Morland objects to novels.'

'No, she does not. She very often reads *Sir Charles Grandison*¹ herself; but new books do not fall in our way.'

'*Sir Charles Grandison*! That is an amazing horrid book, is it not? I remember Miss Andrews could not get through the first volume.'

'It is not like *Udolpho* at all; but yet I think it is very entertaining.'

'Do you indeed! you surprise me; I thought it had not been readable. But, my dearest Catherine, have you settled what to wear on your head to-night? I am determined at all events to be dressed exactly like you.'

AT NORTHANGER ABBEY

... in the course of a few minutes, she found herself with Henry in the curricle, as happy a being as ever existed. A very short trial convinced her that a curricle was the prettiest equipage in the world; the chaise and four wheeled off with some grandeur, to be sure, but it was a heavy and trouble-

¹ By Samuel Richardson (1689-1761).

some business, and she could not easily forget its having stopped two hours at Petty France. Half the time would have been enough for the curricule, and so nimbly were the light horses disposed to move that, had not the General chosen to have his own carriage lead the way, they could have passed it with ease in half a minute. But the merit of the curricule did not all belong to the horses: Henry drove so well, so quietly, without making any disturbance, without parading to her, or swearing at them; so different from the only gentleman-coachman whom it was in her power to compare him with!¹ And then his hat sat so well, and the innumerable capes of his greatcoat looked so becomingly important! To be driven by him, next to being dancing with him, was certainly the greatest happiness in the world. In addition to every other delight, she had now that of listening to her own praise; of being thanked at least, on his sister's account, for her kindness in thus becoming her visitor; of hearing it ranked as real friendship, and described as creating real gratitude. His sister, he said, was uncomfortably circumstanced; she had no female companion and, in the frequent absence of her father, was sometimes without any companion at all.

'But how can that be?' said Catherine; 'are not you with her?'

'Northanger is not more than half my home; I have an establishment at my own house in Woodston, which is nearly twenty miles from my father's, and some of my time is necessarily spent there.'

'How sorry you must be for that!'

'I am always sorry to leave Eleanor.'

¹ Isabella's brother, John.

‘Yes; but besides your affection for her, you must be so fond of the abbey! After being used to such a home as the abbey, an ordinary parsonage-house must be very disagreeable.’

He smiled, and said, ‘You have formed a very favourable idea of the abbey.’

‘To be sure I have. Is not it a fine old place, just like what one reads about?’

‘And are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as “what one reads about” may produce? Have you a stout heart? Nerves fit for sliding panels and tapestry?’

‘Oh! yes, I do not think I should be easily frightened, because there would be so many people in the house; and besides, it has never been uninhabited and left deserted for years, and then the family come back to it unawares, without giving any notice, as generally happens.’

‘No, certainly. We shall not have to explore our way into a hall dimly lighted by the expiring embers of a wood fire, nor be obliged to spread our beds on the floor of a room without windows, doors, or furniture. But you must be aware that when a young lady is (by whatever means) introduced into a dwelling of this kind, she is always lodged apart from the rest of the family. While they snugly repair to their own end of the house, she is formally conducted by Dorothy, the ancient housekeeper, up a different staircase, and along many gloomy passages, into an apartment never used since some cousin or kin died in it about twenty years before. Can you stand such a ceremony as this? Will not your mind misgive you, when you find yourself in this gloomy chamber, too lofty and expansive for

you, with only the feeble rays of a single lamp to take in its size, its walls hung with tapestry exhibiting figures as large as life, and the bed, of dark green stuff or purple velvet, presenting even a funereal appearance. Will not your heart sink within you?

'Oh! but this will not happen to me, I am sure.'

'How fearfully will you examine the furniture of your apartment! And what will you discern? Not tables, toilettes, wardrobes, or drawers, but on one side perhaps the remains of a broken lute, on the other a ponderous chest which no efforts can open, and over the fireplace a portrait of some handsome warrior, whose features will so incomprehensibly strike you that you will not be able to withdraw your eyes from it. Dorothy, meanwhile, no less struck by your appearance, gazes on you in great agitation, and drops a few unintelligible hints. To raise your spirits, moreover, she gives you reason to suppose that the part of the abbey you inhabit is undoubtedly haunted, and informs you that you will not have a single domestic within call. With this parting cordial she curtsies off; you listen to the sound of her receding footsteps as long as the last echo can reach you: and when, with fainting spirits, you attempt to fasten your door, you discover, with increased alarm, that it has no lock.'

'Oh! Mr. Tilney, how frightful! This is just like a book! But it cannot really happen to me. I am sure your housekeeper is not really Dorothy. Well, what then?'

'Nothing further to alarm, perhaps, may occur the first night. After surmounting your *unconquerable* horror of the bed, you will retire to rest,

and get a few hours' unquiet slumber. But on the second or, at farthest, the *third* night after your arrival, you will probably have a violent storm. Peals of thunder so loud as to seem to shake the edifice to its foundations will roll round the neighbouring mountains; and during the frightful gusts of wind which accompany it, you will probably think you discern (for your lamp is not extinguished) one part of the hanging more violently agitated than the rest. Unable of course to repress your curiosity in so favourable a moment for indulging it, you will instantly arise, and, throwing your dressing-gown around you, proceed to examine this mystery. After a very short search, you will discover a division in the tapestry so artfully constructed as to defy the minutest inspection, and on opening it, a door will immediately appear, which door being only secured by massy bars and a padlock, you will, after a few efforts, succeed in opening, and, with your lamp in your hand, will pass through it into a small vaulted room.'

'No, indeed; I should be too much frightened to do any such thing.'

'What! not when Dorothy has given you to understand that there is a secret subterraneous communication between your apartment and the chapel of St. Anthony, scarcely two miles off. Could you shrink from so simple an adventure? No, no, you will proceed into this small vaulted room, and through this into several others, without perceiving anything very remarkable in either. In one, perhaps, there may be a dagger, in another a few drops of blood, and in a third the remains of some instrument of torture; but there being nothing in all this

out of the common way, and your lamp being nearly exhausted, you will return towards your own apartment. In repassing through the small vaulted room, however, your eyes will be attracted towards a large, old-fashioned cabinet of ebony and gold, which, though narrowly examining the furniture before, you had passed unnoticed. Impelled by an irresistible presentiment, you will eagerly advance to it, unlock its folding doors, and search into every drawer; but for some time without discovering anything of importance—perhaps nothing but a considerable hoard of diamonds. At last, however, by touching a secret spring, an inner compartment will open, a roll of paper appears, you seize it—it contains many sheets of manuscript; you hasten with the precious treasure into your own chamber, but scarcely have you been able to decipher: “Oh! thou, whomsoever thou mayst be, into whose hands these memoirs of the wretched Matilda may fall,” when your lamp suddenly expires in the socket, and leaves you in total darkness.’

‘Oh! no, no! do not say so. Well, go on.’

But Henry was too much amused by the interest he had raised to be able to carry it farther; he could no longer command solemnity either of subject or voice, and was obliged to entreat her to use her own fancy in the perusal of Matilda’s woes. Catherine, recollecting herself, grew ashamed of her eagerness, and began earnestly to assure him that her attention had been fixed without the smallest apprehension of really meeting with what he related. ‘Miss Tilney, she was sure, would never put her into such a chamber as he had described! She was not at all afraid.’

As they drew near the end of their journey, her impatience for a sight of the abbey—for some time suspended by his conversation on subjects very different—returned in full force, and every bend in the road was expected, with solemn awe, to afford a glimpse of its massy walls of grey stone, rising amidst a grove of ancient oaks, with the last beams of the sun playing in beautiful splendour on its high Gothic windows. But so low did the building stand, that she found herself passing through the great gates of the lodge into the very grounds of Northanger, without having discerned even an antique chimney.

She knew not that she had any right to be surprised, but there was a something in this mode of approach which she certainly had not expected. To pass between lodges of a modern appearance, to find herself with such ease in the very precincts of the abbey, and driven so rapidly along a smooth, level road of fine gravel, without obstacle, alarm or solemnity of any kind, struck her as odd and inconsistent. She was not long at leisure, however, for such considerations. A sudden scud of rain driving full in her face, made it impossible for her to observe anything further, and fixed all her thoughts on the welfare of her new straw bonnet: and she was actually under the Abbey walls, was springing, with Henry's assistance, from the carriage, was beneath the shelter of the old porch, and had even passed on to the hall, where her friend and the General were waiting to welcome her, without feeling one awful foreboding of future misery to herself, or one moment's suspicion of any past scenes of horror being acted within the solemn edifice.

A MYSTERIOUS DOCUMENT

The night was stormy; the wind had been rising at intervals the whole afternoon; and by the time the party broke up, it blew and rained violently. Catherine, as she crossed the hall, listened to the tempest with sensations of awe; and, when she heard it rage round a corner of the ancient building and close with sudden fury a distant door, felt for the first time that she was really in an abbey. Yes, these were characteristic sounds: they brought to her recollection a countless variety of dreadful situations and horrid scenes, which such buildings had witnessed, and such storms ushered in; and most heartily did she rejoice in the happier circumstances attending her entrance within walls so solemn! *She* had nothing to dread from midnight assassins or drunken gallants. Henry had certainly been only in jest in what he had told her that morning. In a house so furnished, and so guarded, she could have nothing to explore or to suffer, and might go to her bedroom as securely as if it had been her own chamber at Fullerton. Thus wisely fortifying her mind, as she proceeded upstairs, she was enabled, especially on perceiving that Miss Tilney slept only two doors from her, to enter her room with a tolerably stout heart; and her spirits were immediately assisted by the cheerful blaze of a wood fire. 'How much better is this,' said she, as she walked to the fender; 'how much better to find a fire ready lit, than to have to wait shivering in the cold till all the family are in bed, as so many poor girls have been obliged to do, and then to have a faithful old servant frightening one by coming in with a faggot! How

glad I am that Northanger is what it is! If it had been like some other places, I do not know that, in such a night as this, I could have answered for my courage; but now, to be sure, there is nothing to alarm one.'

She looked round the room. The window curtains seemed in motion. It could be nothing but the violence of the wind penetrating through the divisions of the shutters; and she stepped boldly forward, carelessly humming a tune, to assure herself of its being so, peeped courageously behind each curtain, saw nothing on either low window-seat to scare her, and on placing a hand against the shutter, felt the strongest conviction of the wind's force. A glance at the old chest, as she turned away from this examination, was not without its use; she scorned the causeless fears of an idle fancy, and began with a most happy indifference to prepare herself for bed. 'She should take her time; she should not hurry herself; she did not care if she were the last person up in the house. But she would not make up her fire; *that* would seem cowardly, as if she wished for the protection of light after she were in bed.' The fire, therefore, died away; and Catherine, having spent the best part of an hour in her arrangements, was beginning to think of stepping into bed, when, on giving a parting glance round the room, she was struck by the appearance of a high, old-fashioned black cabinet, which, though in a situation conspicuous enough, had never caught her notice before. Henry's words, his description of the ebony cabinet which was to escape her observation at first, immediately rushed across her; and though there could be nothing really in it, there was some-

thing whimsical, it was certainly a very remarkable coincidence! She took her candle and looked closely at the cabinet. It was not absolutely ebony and gold; but it was japan, black and yellow japan of the handsomest kind; and as she held her candle, the yellow had very much the effect of gold.

The key was in the door, and she had a strange fancy to look into it; not, however, with the smallest expectation of finding anything, but it was so very odd, after what Henry had said. In short, she could not sleep till she had examined it. So, placing the candle with great caution on a chair, she seized the key with a very tremulous hand and tried to turn it; but it resisted her utmost strength. Alarmed, but not discouraged, she tried it another way; a bolt flew, and she believed herself successful; but how strangely mysterious! the door was still immovable. She paused a moment in breathless wonder. The wind roared down the chimney, the rain beat in torrents against the windows, and everything seemed to speak the awfulness of her situation. To retire to bed, however, unsatisfied on such a point, would be vain, since sleep must be impossible with the consciousness of a cabinet so mysteriously closed in her immediate vicinity. Again, therefore, she applied herself to the key, and after moving it in every possible way, for some instants, with the determined celerity of hope's last effort, the door suddenly yielded to her hand: her heart leaped with exultation at such a victory, and having thrown open each folding door, the second being secured only by bolts of less wonderful construction than the lock, though in that her eye could not discern anything unusual, a double range

of small drawers appeared in view, with some larger drawers above and below them, and in the centre, a small door, closed also with a lock and key, secured in all probability a cavity of importance.

Catherine's heart beat quick, but her courage did not fail her. With a cheek flushed by hope, and an eye straining with curiosity, her fingers grasped the handle of a drawer and drew it forth. It was entirely empty. With less alarm and greater eagerness she seized a second, a third, a fourth; each was equally empty. Not one was left unsearched, and in not one was anything found. Well read in the art of concealing a treasure, the possibility of false linings to the drawers did not escape her, and she felt round each with anxious acuteness in vain. The place in the middle alone remained now unexplored; and though she had 'never from the first had the smallest idea of finding anything in any part of the cabinet, and was not in the least disappointed at her ill success thus far, it would be foolish not to examine it thoroughly while she was about it.' It was some time, however, before she could unfasten the door, the same difficulty occurring in the management of this inner lock as of the outer; but at length it did open; and not vain, as hitherto, was her search; her quick eyes directly fell on a roll of paper pushed back into the further part of the cavity, apparently for concealment, and her feelings at that moment were indescribable. Her heart fluttered, her knees trembled, and her cheeks grew pale. She seized, with an unsteady hand, the precious manuscript, for half a glance sufficed to ascertain written characters; and while she acknowledged with awful sensations this striking exempli-

fication of what Henry had foretold, resolved instantly to peruse every line before she attempted to rest.

The dimness of the light her candle emitted made her turn to it with alarm; but there was no danger of its sudden extinction, it had yet some hours to burn; and that she might not have any greater difficulty in distinguishing the writing than what its ancient date might occasion, she hastily snuffed it. Alas! it was snuffed and extinguished in one. A lamp could not have expired with more awful effect. Catherine, for a few moments, was motionless with horror. It was done completely; not a remnant of light in the wick could give hope to the rekindling breath. Darkness impenetrable and immovable filled the room. A violent gust of wind, rising with sudden fury, added fresh horror to the moment. Catherine trembled from head to foot. In the pause which succeeded, a sound like receding footsteps and the closing of a distant door struck on her affrighted ear. Human nature could support no more. A cold sweat stood on her forehead, the manuscript fell from her hand, and groping her way to the bed, she jumped hastily in, and sought some suspension of agony by creeping far underneath the clothes.

To close her eyes in sleep that night she felt must be entirely out of the question. With a curiosity so justly awakened, and feelings in every way so agitated, repose must be absolutely impossible. The storm too abroad so dreadful! She had not been used to feel alarm from wind, but now every blast seemed fraught with awful intelligence. The manuscript so wonderfully found, so wonderfully

accomplishing the morning's prediction, how was it to be accounted for? What could it contain? to whom could it relate? by what means could it have been so long concealed? and how singularly strange that it should fall to her lot to discover it! Till she had made herself mistress of its contents, however, she could have neither repose nor comfort; and with the sun's first rays she was determined to peruse it. But many were the tedious hours which must yet intervene. She shuddered, tossed about in her bed, and envied every quiet sleeper. The storm still raged, and various were the noises, more terrific even than the wind, which struck at intervals on her startled ear. The very curtains of her bed seemed at one moment in motion, and at another the lock of her door was agitated, as if by the attempt of somebody to enter. Hollow murmurs seemed to creep along the gallery, and more than once her blood was chilled by the sound of distant moans. Hour after hour passed away, and the wearied Catherine had heard three proclaimed by all the clocks in the house, before the tempest subsided, or she unknowingly fell fast asleep.

The housemaid's folding back her window-shutters at eight o'clock the next day was the sound which first roused Catherine; and she opened her eyes, wondering that they could ever have been closed, on objects of cheerfulness; her fire was already burning, and a bright morning had succeeded the tempest of the night. Instantaneously with the consciousness of existence, returned her recollection of the manuscript; and springing from the bed in the very moment of the maid's going

away, she eagerly collected every scattered sheet which had burst from the roll on its falling to the ground, and flew back to enjoy the luxury of their perusal on her pillow. She now plainly saw that she must not expect a manuscript of equal length with the generality of what she had shuddered over in books, for the roll, seeming to consist entirely of small disjointed sheets, was altogether but of trifling size, and much less than she had supposed it to be at first.

Her greedy eye glanced rapidly over a page. She started at its import. Could it be possible, or did not her senses play her false? An inventory of linen, in coarse and modern characters, seemed all that was before her! If the evidence of sight might be trusted, she held a washing-bill in her hand. She seized another sheet, and saw the same articles with little variation; a third, and a fourth, and a fifth presented nothing new. Shirts, stockings, cravats and waistcoats faced her in each. Two others, penned by the same hand, marked an expenditure scarcely more interesting, in letters, hair-powders, shoe-string and breeches-ball. And the larger sheet, which had enclosed the rest, seemed by its first cramp line, 'To poultice chestnut mare,' a farrier's bill! Such was the collection of papers (left, perhaps, as she could then suppose, by the negligence of a servant in the place whence she had taken them) which had filled her with expectation and alarm, and robbed her of half her night's rest!

THE WATSONS

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

MR. WATSON, of Stanton, near Dorking, Surrey.

ELIZABETH
PENELOPE
MARGARET
EMMA

} his daughters.

MR. ROBERT WATSON, Attorney, of Croydon, Surrey, elder son of Mr. Watson.

MRS. ROBERT WATSON (Jane).

LADY OSBORNE, of Osborne Castle, Wickstead.

LORD OSBORNE, her son.

MISS OSBORNE, her daughter.

MISS FANNY CARR, a friend of Miss Osborne.

THE REV. MR. HOWARD, formerly tutor to Lord Osborne, now Rector of Wickstead.

MRS. BLAKE, his widowed sister.

CHARLES, her son, aged ten.

MR. TOM MUSGRAVE.

CAPTAIN HUNTER.

COLONEL BERESFORD.

NANNY
BETTY

} servants to the Watsons.

THE STORY

Emma Watson had been brought up by an aunt. The story opens with her return, after many years, to her home at Stanton, when she is 'to make her first appearance in the neighbourhood,' or, in other words, to attend her first ball. At the ball (see page 130) where her first partner is little Charles Blake, she meets Mr. Tom Musgrave and Mr. Howard.

Lord Osborne is also at the ball. He does not like dancing, yet when Mr. Howard is dancing with Emma, he is 'continually

at Mr. Howard's elbow,' and, before leaving the ball-room, comes back to 'look in the window-seat behind her for the gloves which were visibly compressed in his hand.'

He has been so much attracted that, three days later, he comes with Tom Musgrave to call upon the Watsons (see page 134). Emma is not so odd a young lady as not to be flattered by his interest, but it is evident that she would have been better pleased if Mr. Howard had taken the opportunity to come with him.

Shortly afterwards her brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Watson, come to spend a few days at Stanton. Mr. Robert is a hard-hearted man of the world, and Mrs. Robert a vulgar, patronizing woman, and Emma, who has found nothing in common with any of her sisters save Elizabeth (and not much with her), is glad to escape as much as possible to her invalid father's room.

The novel breaks off abruptly with Emma's refusal of an invitation to return to Croydon with Mr. and Mrs. Robert. But from what Cassandra Austen told her nieces we know that Mr. Watson was soon to die, leaving Emma dependent upon her brother and his wife: that she was to refuse an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne, and to marry Mr. Howard, the uncle of little Charles.

CHARLES FINDS A PARTNER

Emma in the meanwhile was not unobserved or unadmired herself. A new face, and a very pretty one, could not be slighted. Her name was whispered from one party to another, and no sooner had the signal been given by the orchestra's striking up a favourite air, which seemed to call the young to their duty and people the centre of the room, than she found herself engaged to dance with a brother officer introduced by Captain Hunter.

Emma Watson was not more than of the middle height, well made and plump, with an air of healthy vigour. Her skin was very brown, but clear, smooth, and glowing, which, with a lively eye, a

sweet smile, and an open countenance, gave beauty to attract, and expression to make that beauty improve on acquaintance. Having no reason to be dissatisfied with her partner, the evening began very pleasantly to her, and her feelings perfectly coincided with the reiterated observation of others, that it was an excellent ball.

The two first dances were not quite over when the returning sound of carriages after a long interruption called general notice! 'The Osbornes are coming!' 'The Osbornes are coming!' was repeated round the room. After some minutes of extraordinary bustle without, and watchful curiosity within, the important party, preceded by the attentive master of the inn, to open a door which was never shut, made their appearance. They consisted of Lady Osborne; her son, Lord Osborne; her daughter, Miss Osborne; Miss Carr, her daughter's friend; Mr. Howard, formerly tutor to Lord Osborne, now clergyman of the parish in which the castle stood; Mrs. Blake, a widow-sister, who lived with him; her son, a fine boy of ten years old; and Mr. Tom Musgrave, who probably, imprisoned within his own room, had been listening in bitter impatience to the sound of the music for the last half-hour. In their progress up the room they paused almost immediately behind Emma to receive the compliments of some acquaintance, and she heard Lady Osborne observe that they had made a point of coming early for the gratification of Mrs. Blake's little boy, who was uncommonly fond of dancing. Emma looked at them all as they passed, but chiefly and with most interest on Tom Musgrave, who was certainly a genteel, good-looking

young man. Of the females Lady Osborne had by much the finest person; though nearly fifty, she was very handsome, and had all the dignity of rank.

Lord Osborne was a very fine young man, but there was an air of coldness, of carelessness, even of awkwardness about him, which seemed to speak him out of his element in a ball-room. He came, in fact, only because it was judged expedient for him to please the borough; he was not fond of women's company, and he never danced. Mr. Howard was an agreeable-looking man, a little more than thirty.

At the conclusion of the two dances, Emma found herself, she knew not how, seated amongst the Osbornes' set; and she was immediately struck with the fine countenance and animated gestures of the little boy, as he was standing before his mother, considering when they should begin.

'You will not be surprised at Charles's impatience,' said Mrs. Blake, a lively, pleasant-looking little woman of five or six and thirty, to a lady who was standing near her, 'when you know what a partner he is to have. Miss Osborne has been so very kind as to promise to dance the two first dances with him.'

'Oh, yes! we have been engaged this week,' cried the boy, 'and we are to dance down every couple.'

On the other side of Emma, Miss Osborne, Miss Carr, and a party of young men were standing engaged in very lively consultation; and soon afterwards she saw the smartest officer of the set walking off to the orchestra to order the dance, while Miss Osborne, passing before her to her little expecting partner, hastily said, 'Charles, I beg your pardon

for not keeping my engagement, but I am going to dance these two dances with Colonel Beresford. I know you will excuse me, and I will certainly dance with you after tea'; and, without staying for an answer, she turned again to Miss Carr, and in another minute was led by Colonel Beresford to begin the set.

If the poor little boy's face had in its happiness been interesting to Emma, it was infinitely more so under this sudden reverse; he stood the picture of disappointment with crimsoned cheeks, quivering lips, and eyes bent on the floor. His mother, stifling her own mortification, tried to soothe him with the prospect of Miss Osborne's second promise; but, though he contrived to utter with an effort of boyish bravery, 'Oh, I do not mind it!' it was very evident by the unceasing agitation of his features that he minded it as much as ever.

Emma did not think or reflect; she felt and acted. 'I shall be very happy to dance with you, sir, if you like it,' said she, holding out her hand with the most unaffected good-humour. The boy, in one moment restored to all his first delight, looked joyfully at his mother; and stepping forward with an honest, simple, 'Thank you, ma'am,' was instantly ready to attend his new acquaintance. The thankfulness of Mrs. Blake was more diffuse; with a look most expressive of unexpected pleasure and lively gratitude, she turned to her neighbour with repeated and fervent acknowledgments of so great and condescending a kindness to her boy. Emma with perfect truth could assure her that she could not be giving greater pleasure than she felt herself; and, Charles being provided with his gloves and charged

to keep them on, they joined the set which was now rapidly forming with nearly equal complacency. It was a partnership which could not be noticed without surprise. It gained her a broad stare from Miss Osborne and Miss Carr as they passed her in the dance. 'Upon my word, Charles, you are in luck,' said the former, as she turned him; 'you have got a better partner than me'; to which the happy Charles answered 'Yes.'

Tom Musgrave, who was dancing with Miss Carr, gave her many inquisitive glances; and after a time Lord Osborne himself came, and under pretence of talking to Charles, stood to look at his partner. Though rather distressed by such observation, Emma could not repent what she had done, so happy had it made both the boy and his mother; the latter of whom was continually making opportunities of addressing her with the warmest civility. Her little partner, she found, though bent chiefly on dancing, was not unwilling to speak, when her questions or remarks gave him anything to say; and she learnt, by a sort of inevitable inquiry, that he had two brothers and a sister, that they and their mamma all lived with his uncle at Wickstead, that his uncle taught him Latin, that he was very fond of riding, and had a horse of his own given him by Lord Osborne; and that he had been out once already with Lord Osborne's hounds.

MR. WATSON IS KEPT WAITING FOR HIS DINNER

On the third day after the ball, as Nanny, at five minutes before three, was beginning to bustle into the parlour with the tray and knife-case, she was suddenly called to the front door by the sound of

as smart a rap as the end of a riding-whip could give; and though charged by Miss Watson to let nobody in, returned in half a minute with a look of awkward dismay to hold the parlour door open for Lord Osborne and Tom Musgrave. The surprise of the young ladies may be imagined. No visitors would have been welcome at such a moment, but such visitors as these—such an one as Lord Osborne at least, a nobleman and a stranger—was really distressing.

He looked a little embarrassed himself, as, on being introduced by his easy voluble friend, he muttered something of doing himself the honour of waiting upon Mr. Watson. Though Emma could not but take the compliment of the visit to herself, she was very far from enjoying it. She felt all the inconsistency of such an acquaintance with the very humble style in which they were obliged to live; and, having in her aunt's family been used to many of the elegancies of life, was fully sensible of all that must be open to the ridicule of richer people in her present home. Of the pain of such feelings, Elizabeth knew very little. Her simple mind, or juster reason, saved her from such mortification; and though shrinking under a general sense of inferiority, she felt no particular shame. Mr. Watson, as the gentlemen had already heard from Nanny, was not well enough to be downstairs. With much concern they took their seats; Lord Osborne near Emma, and the convenient Mr. Musgrave, in high spirits at his own importance, on the other side of the fireplace with Elizabeth. *He* was at no loss for words; but when Lord Osborne had hoped that Emma had not caught cold at the

ball he had nothing more to say for some time, and could only gratify his eye by occasional glances at his fair companion. Emma was not inclined to give herself much trouble for his entertainment, and after hard labour of mind, he produced the remark of its being a very fine day, and followed it up with the question of 'Have you been walking this morning?'

'No, my lord, we thought it too dirty.'

'You should wear half-boots.' After another pause: 'Nothing sets off a neat ankle more than a half-boot; nankeen, galoshed with black, looks very well. Do not you like half-boots?'

'Yes; but unless they are so stout as to injure their beauty, they are not fit for country walking.'

'Ladies should ride in dirty weather. Do you ride?'

'No, my lord.'

'I wonder every lady does not; a woman never looks better than on horseback.'

'But every woman may not have the inclination or the means.'

'If they knew how much it became them, they would all have the inclination; and I fancy, Miss Watson, when once they had the inclination, the means would soon follow.'

'Your lordship thinks we always have our own way. *That* is a point on which ladies and gentlemen have long disagreed; but without pretending to decide it, I may say that there are some circumstances which even women cannot control. Female economy will do a great deal, my lord, but it cannot turn a small income into a large one.'

Lord Osborne was silenced. Her manner had

been neither sententious nor sarcastic, but there was a something in its mild seriousness, as well as in the words themselves, which made his lordship think; and when he addressed her again it was with a degree of considerate propriety totally unlike the half-awkward, half-fearless style of his former remarks. It was a new thing with him to wish to please a woman; it was the first time he had ever felt what was due to a woman in Emma's situation; but as he was wanting neither in sense nor a good disposition he did not feel it without effect.

'You have not been long in this country, I understand,' said he, in the tone of a gentleman. 'I hope you are pleased with it.'

He was rewarded by a gracious answer, and a more liberal full view of her face than she had yet bestowed. Unused to exert himself, and happy in contemplating her, he then sat in silence for some minutes longer, while Tom Musgrave was chattering to Elizabeth; till they were interrupted by Nanny's approach, who, half-opening the door and putting in her head, said—

'Please, ma'am, master wants to know why he be'n't to have his dinner?'

The gentlemen, who had hitherto disregarded every symptom, however positive, of the nearness of that meal, now jumped up with apologies, while Elizabeth called briskly after Nanny to take up the fowls.

'I am sorry it happens so,' she added, turning good-humouredly towards Musgrave, 'but you know what early hours we keep.'

Tom had nothing to say for himself, he knew it very well, and such honest simplicity, such shame-

less truth, rather bewildered him. Lord Osborne's parting compliments took some time, his inclination for speech seeming to increase with the shortness of the term for indulgence. He recommended exercise in defiance of dirt; spoke again in praise of half-boots; begged that his sister might be allowed to send Emma the name of her shoemaker; and concluded with saying, 'My hounds will be hunting this country next week. I believe they will throw off at Stanton Wood on Wednesday at nine o'clock. I mention this in hopes of your being drawn out to see what's going on. If the morning's tolerable, pray do us the honour of giving us your good wishes in person.'

The sisters looked on each other with astonishment when their visitors had withdrawn.

'Here's an unaccountable honour!' cried Elizabeth at last. 'Who would have thought of Lord Osborne's coming to Stanton? He is very handsome; but Tom Musgrave looks all to nothing the smartest and most fashionable man of the two. I am glad he did not say anything to me; I would not have had to talk to such a great man for the world. Tom was very agreeable, was not he? But did you hear him ask where Miss Penelope and Miss Margaret were, when he first came in? It put me out of patience. I am glad Nanny had not laid the cloth however, it would have looked so awkward; just the tray did not signify.'

MANSFIELD PARK

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

SIR THOMAS BERTRAM, of Mansfield Park, Northamptonshire.

LADY BERTRAM, his wife, formerly Miss Maria Ward.

TOM
EDMUND } his sons.

MARIA
JULIA } his daughters.

MRS. NORRIS, sister to Lady Bertram, and wife of the Rector of Mansfield.

MRS. PRICE, wife of Lieutenant Price of the Marines, and sister to Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris.

FANNY PRICE, the eldest of Mrs. Price's ten children.

THE HON. JOHN YATES, a friend of Tom Bertram.

MR. JAMES RUSHWORTH, who married Maria Bertram.

THE REV. DR. GRANT, Rector of Mansfield after the death of Mr. Norris.

MRS. GRANT, his wife.

HENRY CRAWFORD
MARY CRAWFORD } Mrs. Grant's half-brother and sister.

MISS LEE, governess to Maria and Julia Bertram.

NANNY, Mrs. Norris's servant.

THE STORY

When Miss Fanny Ward of Huntingdon married Lieutenant Price of the Marines, she married 'to disoblige her family.' Her sisters had married more prudently. Maria was the wife of Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, near Northampton; the eldest sister had contented herself with Mr. Norris, the rector of Mansfield.

Eleven years after her marriage, Mrs. Price found herself with a disabled husband and nine children, of whom the eldest, Fanny, was nine. Mrs. Norris, always ready to show others their duty,

suggested to Sir Thomas Bertram that 'among them' they should adopt Fanny Price (see page 141). So Fanny came to live at Mansfield Park: to be awed by Sir Thomas, depressed by Lady Bertram (who cared more for her pug than her children), and admonished by Mrs. Norris who never forgot to remind her of her dependent position. Of her cousins, Tom gave her presents and laughed at her, while the girls, finding 'she had but two sashes and had never learnt French,' left her to herself; only Edmund was kind to her.

When Fanny was fifteen, the death of Mr. Norris brought a new rector to Mansfield, Dr. Grant. With him came his wife, and, three years later, his wife's half-brother and sister, Henry and Mary Crawford. About this time, too, Maria Bertram became engaged to Mr. James Rushworth, of Sotherton Court, 'a heavy young man with not more than common sense' and £12,000 a year. To these new-comers, Tom Bertram added the Hon. John Yates, 'with his head full of acting.' He quickly infected the others (all save Edmund and Fanny) with 'an itch for acting' (see page 147). Even Edmund was drawn into the theatricals at last—Edmund who was 'convinced that my father would totally disapprove it.' But Sir Thomas was away in Antigua. So the play was chosen, and rehearsals went forward until one day Sir Thomas returned unexpectedly to surprise Mr. Yates in the middle of a ranting speech. Thereupon that gentleman gave 'the very best start he had ever given in the whole course of his rehearsals,' and the Mansfield Park theatre 'closed with the greatest *tclat*.'

The theatricals had left some of the actors very much at cross-purposes. Both Maria and Julia were in love with Henry Crawford; Edmund was in love with Mary Crawford, and quiet little Fanny was in love with Edmund. Henry Crawford, however, went away without a sign to either lady, and Maria very quickly decided to marry her Mr. Rushworth. After 'a very proper wedding,' when Lady Bertram stood 'with salts in her hand' and Mrs. Norris 'tried to cry,' the Rushworths departed for Brighton, taking Julia with them.

With her cousins gone, Fanny's position at Mansfield Park became a little better. She went to dine at the Rectory, though Mrs. Norris 'cannot imagine why Mrs. Grant should think of asking her' (see page 160). There once more she met Henry Crawford, who was not long in deciding to amuse himself by making love to her. But amusement soon became sober reality.

Fanny, faithful to Edmund, would have nothing to do with him. She refused him, even daring to go against the wishes of Sir Thomas. As for Mrs. Norris, 'she was more angry with Fanny for having received such an offer than for refusing it.'

Meanwhile Edmund was no nearer marrying Mary Crawford. He was a clergyman by now, and Miss Crawford had no intention of spending her life in a parsonage.

'The cure of unconquerable passions, and the transfer of unchanging attachments' vary 'very much as to time in different people.' But 'exactly at the time when it was quite natural that it should be so, and not a week earlier,' Edmund ceased to lament Mary Crawford and 'became as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire.'

MRS. NORRIS DOES GOOD BY PROXY

Mrs. Norris was often observing to the others that she could not get her poor sister and her family out of her head, and that, much as they had all done for her, she seemed to be wanting to do more; and at length she could not but own it to be her wish, that poor Mrs. Price should be relieved from the charge and expense of one child entirely out of her great number.

'What if they were among them to undertake the care of her eldest daughter, a girl now nine years old, of an age to require more attention than her poor mother could possibly give? The trouble and expense of it to them would be nothing, compared with the benevolence of the action.' Lady Bertram agreed with her instantly. 'I think we cannot do better,' said she; 'let us send for the child.'

Sir Thomas could not give so instantaneous and unqualified a consent. He debated and hesitated: it was a serious charge; a girl so brought up must be adequately provided for, or there would be cruelty instead of kindness in taking her from her

family. He thought of his own four children, of his two sons, of cousins in love, etc.; but no sooner had he deliberately begun to state his objections than Mrs. Norris interrupted him with a reply to them all, whether stated or not.

‘My dear Sir Thomas, I perfectly comprehend you, and do justice to the generosity and delicacy of your notions, which indeed are quite of a piece with your general conduct; and I entirely agree with you in the main as to the propriety of doing everything one could by way of providing for a child one had in a manner taken into one’s own hands; and I am sure I should be the last person in the world to withhold my mite upon such an occasion. Having no children of my own, who should I look to, in any little matter I may ever have to bestow, but the children of my sisters? and I am sure Mr. Norris is too just—but you know I am a woman of few words and professions. Do not let us be frightened from a good deed by a trifle. Give a girl an education, and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one but she has the means of settling well, without further expense to anybody. A niece of ours, Sir Thomas, I may say, or, at least, of *yours*, would not grow up in this neighbourhood without many advantages. I don’t say she would be so handsome as her cousins. I dare say she would not; but she would be introduced into the society of this country under such very favourable circumstances as, in all human probability, would get her a creditable establishment. You are thinking of your sons; but do not you know that of all things upon earth *that* is the least likely to happen, brought up, as they would

be, always together like brothers and sisters? It is morally impossible. I never knew an instance of it. It is, in fact, the only sure way of providing against the connection. Suppose her a pretty girl, and seen by Tom or Edmund for the first time seven years hence, and I dare say there would be mischief. The very idea of her having been suffered to grow up at a distance from us all in poverty and neglect would be enough to make either of the dear sweet-tempered boys in love with her. But breed her up with them from this time, and suppose her even to have the beauty of an angel, and she will never be more to either than a sister.'

'There is a great deal of truth in what you say,' replied Sir Thomas, 'and far be it from me to throw any fanciful impediment in the way of a plan which would be so consistent with the relative situations of each. I only meant to observe that it ought not to be lightly engaged in, and that to make it really serviceable to Mrs. Price, and creditable to ourselves, we must secure to the child, or consider ourselves engaged to secure to her hereafter, as circumstances may arise, the provision of a gentlewoman, if no such establishment should offer as you are so sanguine in expecting.'

'I thoroughly understand you,' cried Mrs. Norris; 'you are everything that is generous and considerate, and I am sure we shall never disagree on this point. Whatever I can do, as you well know, I am always ready enough to do for the good of those I love; and, though I could never feel for this little girl the hundredth part of the regard I bear your own dear children, nor consider her, in any respect, so much my own, I should hate myself if I were capable of

neglecting her. Is not she a sister's child? and could I bear to see her want, while I had a bit of bread to give her? My dear Sir Thomas, with all my faults I have a warm heart; and, poor as I am, would rather deny myself the necessities of life than do an ungenerous thing. So, if you are not against it, I will write to my poor sister to-morrow, and make the proposal; and, as soon as matters are settled, *I* will engage to get the child to Mansfield; *you* shall have no trouble about it. My own trouble, you know, I never regard. I will send Nanny to London on purpose, and she may have a bed at her cousin, the saddler's, and the child be appointed to meet her there. They may easily get her from Portsmouth to town by the coach, under the care of any creditable person that may chance to be going. I dare say there is always some reputable tradesman's wife or other going up.'

Except to the attack on Nanny's cousin, Sir Thomas no longer made any objection, and a more respectable, though less economical rendezvous being accordingly substituted, everything was considered as settled, and the pleasures of so benevolent a scheme were already enjoyed. The division of gratifying sensations ought not, in strict justice, to have been equal; for Sir Thomas was fully resolved to be the real and consistent patron of the selected child, and Mrs. Norris had not the least intention of being at any expense whatever in her maintenance. As far as walking, talking and contriving reached, she was thoroughly benevolent, and nobody knew better how to dictate liberality to others; but her love of money was equal to her love of directing, and she knew quite as well how to save her own as

to spend that of her friends. Having married on a narrower income than she had been used to look forward to, she had, from the first, fancied a very strict line of economy necessary; and what was begun as a matter of prudence, soon grew into a matter of choice, as an object of that needful solicitude, which there were no children to supply. Had there been a family to provide for, Mrs. Norris might never have saved her money; but having no care of that kind, there was nothing to impede her frugality, or lessen the comfort of making a yearly addition to an income which they had never lived up to. Under this infatuating principle, counteracted by no real affection for her sister, it was impossible for her to aim at more than the credit of projecting and arranging so expensive a charity; though perhaps she might so little know herself as to walk home to the Parsonage, after this conversation, in the happy belief of being the most liberal-minded sister and aunt in the world.

When the subject was brought forward again, her views were more fully explained; and, in reply to Lady Bertram's calm inquiry of 'Where shall the child come to first, sister, to you or to us?' Sir Thomas heard, with some surprise, that it would be totally out of Mrs. Norris's power to take any share in the personal charge of her. He had been considering her as a particularly welcome addition at the Parsonage, as a desirable companion to an aunt who had no children of her own; but he found himself wholly mistaken. Mrs. Norris was sorry to say, that the little girl's staying with them, at least as things then were, was quite out of the question. Poor Mr. Norris's indifferent state of

health made it an impossibility: he could no more bear the noise of a child than he could fly; if, indeed, he should ever get well of his gouty complaints, it would be a different matter; she should then be glad to take her turn, and think nothing of the inconvenience; but just now poor Mr. Norris took up every moment of her time, and the very mention of such a thing she was sure would distract him.

‘Then she had better come to us,’ said Lady Bertram, with the utmost composure. After a short pause, Sir Thomas added with dignity, ‘Yes; let her home be in this house. We will endeavour to do our duty by her, and she will at least have the advantage of companions of her own age, and of a regular instructress.’

‘Very true,’ cried Mrs. Norris, ‘which are both very important considerations: and it will be just the same to Miss Lee, whether she has three girls to teach, or only two—there can be no difference. I only wish I could be more useful; but, you see, I do all in my power. I am not one of those that spare their own trouble; and Nanny shall fetch her, however it may put me to inconvenience to have my chief counsellor away for three days. I suppose, sister, you will put the child in the little white attic, near the old nurseries. It will be much the best place for her, so near Miss Lee, and not far from the girls, and close by the housemaids, who could either of them help dress her, you know, and take care of her clothes, for I suppose you would not think it fair to expect Ellis to wait on her as well as the others. Indeed, I do not see that you could possibly place her anywhere else.’

Lady Bertram made no opposition.

'I hope she will prove a well-disposed girl,' continued Mrs. Norris, 'and be sensible of her uncommon good fortune in having such friends.'

'Should her disposition be really bad,' said Sir Thomas, 'we must not, for our own children's sake, continue her in the family; but there is no reason to expect so great an evil. We shall probably see much to wish altered in her, and must prepare ourselves for gross ignorance, some meanness of opinions, and very distressing vulgarity of manner; but these are not incurable faults; nor, I trust, can they be dangerous for her associates. Had my daughters been *younger* than herself, I should have considered the introduction of such a companion as a matter of very serious moment; but as it is, I hope there can be nothing to fear for *them*, and everything to hope for *her*, from the association.'

'That is exactly what I think,' cried Mrs. Norris, 'and what I was saying to my husband this morning. It will be an education for the child, said I, only being with her cousins; if Miss Lee taught her nothing, she would learn to be good and clever from *them*.'

'I hope she will not tease my poor pug,' said Lady Bertram; 'I have but just got Julia to leave it alone.'

AMATEUR THEATRICALS

The Honourable John Yates, this new friend, had not much to recommend him beyond habits of fashion and expense, and being the younger son of a lord with a tolerable independence; and Sir Thomas would probably have thought his introduction at Mansfield by no means desirable. Mr.

Bertram's acquaintance with him had begun at Weymouth, where they had spent ten days together in the same society, and the friendship, if friendship it might be called, had been proved and perfected by Mr. Yates's being invited to take Mansfield in his way, whenever he could, and by his promising to come; and he did come rather earlier than had been expected, in consequence of the sudden breaking-up of a large party assembled for gaiety at the house of another friend, which he had left Weymouth to join. He came on the wings of disappointment, and with his head full of acting, for it had been a theatrical party; and the play, in which he had borne a part, was within two days of representation, when the sudden death of one of the nearest connections of the family had destroyed the scheme and dispersed the performers. To be so near happiness, so near fame, so near the long paragraph in praise of the private theatricals at Ecclesford, the seat of the Right Hon. Lord Ravenshaw, in Cornwall, which would of course have immortalized the whole party for at least a twelvemonth! and being so near, to lose it all, was an injury to be keenly felt, and Mr. Yates could talk of nothing else. Ecclesford and its theatre, with its arrangements and dresses, rehearsals and jokes, was his never-failing subject, and to boast of the past his only consolation.

Happily for him, a love of the theatre is so general, an itch for acting so strong among young people, that he could hardly out-talk the interest of his hearers. From the first casting of the parts, to the epilogue, it was all bewitching, and there were few who did not wish to have been a party concerned,

or would have hesitated to try their skill. The play had been 'Lovers' Vows,'¹ and Mr. Yates was to have been Count Cassel. 'A trifling part,' said he, 'and not at all to my taste, and such a one as I certainly would not accept again; but I was determined to make no difficulties. Lord Ravenshaw and the Duke had appropriated the only two characters worth playing before I reached Ecclesford; and though Lord Ravenshaw offered to resign his to me it was impossible to take it, you know. I was sorry for *him* that he should have so mistaken his powers, for he was no more equal to the Baron—a little man, with a weak voice, always hoarse after the first ten minutes! It must have injured the piece materially; but *I* was resolved to make no difficulties. Sir Henry thought the Duke not equal to Frederick, but that was because Sir Henry wanted the part himself; whereas it was certainly in the best hands of the two. I was surprised to see Sir Henry such a stick. Luckily the strength of the piece did not depend upon him. Our Agatha was inimitable, and the Duke was thought very great by many. And, upon the whole, it would certainly have gone off wonderfully.'

'It was a hard case, upon my word'; and, 'I do think you were very much to be pitied,' were the kind responses of listening sympathy.

'It is not worth complaining about, but to be sure the poor old dowager could not have died at a worse time; and it is impossible to help wishing that the news could have been suppressed for just the three days we wanted. It was but three days;

¹ Translated from the German of Kotzebue by Mrs. Inchbald (1753-1821).

and being only a grandmother, and all happening two hundred miles off, I think there would have been no great harm, and it *was* suggested, I know; but Lord Ravenshaw, who I suppose is one of the most correct men in England, would not hear of it.'

'An afterpiece instead of a comedy,' said Mr. Bertram. "'Lovers' Vows" were at an end, and Lord and Lady Ravenshaw left to act "My Grandmother"¹ by themselves. Well, the jointure may comfort *him*; and, perhaps, between friends, he began to tremble for his credit and his lungs in the Baron, and was not sorry to withdraw; and to make *you* amends, Yates, I think we must raise a little theatre at Mansfield, and ask you to be our manager.'

This, though the thought of the moment, did not end with the moment; for the inclination to act was awakened, and in no one more strongly than in him who was now master of the house; and who having so much leisure as to make almost any novelty a certain good, had likewise such a degree of lively talents and comic taste as were exactly adapted to the novelty of acting. The thought returned again and again. 'Oh! for the Ecclesford theatre and scenery to try something with!' Each sister could echo the wish; and Henry Crawford, to whom, in all the riot of his gratifications it was yet an untasted pleasure, was quite alive at the idea. 'I really believe,' said he, 'I could be fool enough at this moment to undertake any character that ever was written, from Shylock or Richard III down to the singing hero of a farce in his scarlet coat and cocked hat. I feel as if I could be anything or everything; as if I could rant and storm, or sigh, or cut capers

¹ A farce by Prince Hoare.

in any tragedy or comedy in the English language. Let us be doing something. Be it only half a play, an act, a scene; what should prevent us? Not these countenances I am sure,' looking towards the Miss Bertrams, 'and for a theatre, what signifies a theatre? We shall be only amusing ourselves. Any room in this house might suffice.'

'We must have a curtain,' said Tom Bertram; 'a few yards of green baize for a curtain, and perhaps that may be enough.'

'Oh, quite enough!' cried Mr. Yates, 'with only just a side wing or two run up, doors in flat, and three or four scenes to be let down; nothing more would be necessary on such a plan as this. For mere amusement among ourselves, we should want nothing more.'

'I believe we must be satisfied with *less*,' said Maria. 'There would not be time, and other difficulties would arise. We must rather adopt Mr. Crawford's views, and make the *performance*, not the *theatre*, our object. Many parts of our best plays are independent of scenery.'

'Nay,' said Edmund, who began to listen with alarm. 'Let us do nothing by halves. If we are to act, let it be in a theatre completely fitted up with pit, box, and gallery, and let us have a play entire from beginning to end; so as it be a German play, no matter what, with a good tricking, shifting after-piece, and a figure-dance, and a hornpipe and a song between the acts. If we do not outdo Ecclesford, we do nothing.'

'Now, Edmund, do not be disagreeable,' said Julia. 'Nobody loves a play better than you do, or can have gone much further to see one.'

The business of finding a play that would suit everybody, proved to be no trifle, and the carpenter had received his orders, and taken his measurements, had suggested and removed at least two sets of difficulties, and having made the necessity of an enlargement of plan and expense fully evident, was already at work, while a play was still to seek. Other preparations were also in hand. An enormous roll of green baize had arrived from Northampton, and been cut out by Mrs. Norris (with a saving, by her good management, of full three-quarters of a yard), and was actually forming into a curtain by the housemaids, and still the play was wanting; and as two or three days passed away in this manner, Edmund began almost to hope that none might ever be found.

There were, in fact, so many things to be attended to, so many people to be pleased, so many best characters required, and, above all, such a need that the play should be at once both tragedy and comedy, that there did seem as little chance of a decision, as anything pursued by youth and zeal could hold out.

On the tragic side were the Miss Bertrams, Henry Crawford, and Mr. Yates; on the comic, Tom Bertram, not *quite* alone, because it was evident that Mary Crawford's wishes, though politely kept back, inclined the same way; but his determinateness and his power seemed to make allies unnecessary; and independent of this great irreconcilable difference, they wanted a piece containing very few characters in the whole, but every character first-rate, and three principal women. All the best plays were run over in vain. Neither 'Hamlet,' nor 'Macbeth',

nor 'Othello,' nor 'Douglas,'¹ nor the 'Gamester,'² presented anything that could satisfy even the tragedians; and the 'Rivals,' the 'School for Scandal,'³ 'Wheel of Fortune,'⁴ 'Heir at Law,'⁵ and a long etcetera, were successively dismissed with yet warmer objections. No piece could be proposed that did not supply somebody with a difficulty, and on one side or the other it was a continual repetition of, 'Oh! no, *that* will never do. Let us have no ranting tragedies. Too many characters. Not a tolerable woman's part in the play. Anything but *that*, my dear Tom. It would be impossible to fill it up. One could not expect anybody to take such a part. Nothing but buffoonery from beginning to end. *That* might do, perhaps, but for the low parts. If I *must* give my opinion, I have always thought it the most insipid play in the English language. I do not wish to make objections; I shall be happy to be of any use, but I think we could not choose worse.'

Fanny looked on and listened, not unamused to observe the selfishness which, more or less disguised, seemed to govern them all, and wondering how it would end. For her own gratification she could have wished that something might be acted, for she had never seen even half a play, but everything of higher consequence was against it.

'This will never do,' said Tom Bertram at last. 'We are wasting time most abominably. Some-

¹ A tragedy by John Home (1722-1808).

² A tragedy by Edward Moore (1712-1757).

³ Comedies by Richard Sheridan (1751-1816).

⁴ By George Cumberland (1732-1811).

⁵ By George Colman the Younger (1762-1836).

thing must be fixed on. No matter what, so that something is chosen. We must not be so nice. A few characters too many must not frighten us. We must *double* them. We must descend a little. If a part is insignificant, the greater our credit in making anything of it. From this moment *I* make no difficulties. I take any part you choose to give me, so as it be comic. Let it but be comic, I condition for nothing more.'

For about the fifth time he then proposed the 'Heir at Law,' doubting only whether to prefer Lord Duberly or Dr. Pangloss for himself; and very earnestly, but very unsuccessfully, trying to persuade the others that there were some fine tragic parts in the rest of the *dramatis personæ*.

The pause which followed this fruitless effort was ended by the same speaker, who taking up one of the many volumes of plays that lay on the table, and turning it over, suddenly exclaimed, "'Lovers' Vows!" And why should not "Lovers' Vows" do for *us* as well as for the Ravenshaws? How came it never to be thought of before? It strikes me as if it would do exactly. What say you all? Here are two capital tragic parts for Yates and Crawford, and here is the rhyming butler for me, if nobody else wants it; a trifling part, but the sort of thing I should not dislike, and, as I said before, I am determined to take anything and do my best. And as for the rest, they may be filled up by anybody. It is only Count Cassel and Anhalt.'

The suggestion was generally welcome. Everybody was growing weary of indecision, and the first idea with everybody was that nothing had been proposed before so likely to suit them all. Mr.

Yates was particularly pleased; he had been sighing and longing to do the Baron at Ecclesford, had grudged every rant of Lord Ravenshaw's, and been forced to re-rant it all in his own room. To storm through Baron Wildenhaim was the height of his theatrical ambition, and with the advantage of knowing half the scenes by heart already, he did now, with the greatest alacrity, offer his services for the part. To do him justice, however, he did not resolve to appropriate it; for remembering that there was some very good ranting ground in Frederick, he professed an equal willingness for that. Henry Crawford was ready to take either. Whichever Mr. Yates did not choose, would perfectly satisfy him, and a short parley of compliment ensued. Miss Bertram, feeling all the interest of an Agatha in the question, took on her to decide it, by observing to Mr. Yates that this was a point in which height and figure ought to be considered, and that *his* being the tallest, seemed to fit him peculiarly for the Baron. She was acknowledged to be quite right, and the two parts being accepted accordingly, she was certain of the proper Frederick. Three of the characters were now cast, besides Mr. Rushworth, who was always answered for by Maria as willing to do anything; when Julia, meaning like her sister to be Agatha, began to be scrupulous on Miss Crawford's account.

'This is not behaving well by the absent,' said she. 'Here are not women enough. Amelia and Agatha may do for Maria and me, but here is nothing for your sister, Mr. Crawford.'

Mr. Crawford desired *that* might not be thought of; he was very sure his sister had no wish of acting,

but as she might be useful, and that she would not allow herself to be considered in the present case. But this was immediately opposed by Tom Bertram, who asserted the part of Amelia to be in every respect the property of Miss Crawford, if she would accept it. 'It falls as naturally, as necessarily to her,' said he, 'as Agatha does to one or other of my sisters. It can be no sacrifice on their side, for it is highly comic.'

A short silence followed. Each sister looked anxious; for each felt the best claim to Agatha, and was hoping to have it pressed on her by the rest. Henry Crawford, who meanwhile had taken up the play, and with seeming carelessness was turning over the first act, soon settled the business.

'I must entreat Miss *Julia* Bertram,' said he, 'not to engage in the part of Agatha, or it will be the ruin of all my solemnity. You must not, indeed you must not' (turning to her). 'I could not stand your countenance dressed up in woe and paleness. The many laughs we have had together would infallibly come across me, and Frederick and his knapsack would be obliged to run away.'

Pleasantly, courteously, it was spoken; but the manner was lost in the matter to Julia's feelings. She saw a glance at Maria, which confirmed the injury to herself; it was a scheme, a trick; she was slighted, Maria was preferred; the smile of triumph which Maria was trying to suppress showed how well it was understood, and before Julia could command herself enough to speak, her brother gave his weight against her too, by saying, 'Oh yes! Maria must be Agatha. Maria will be the best Agatha. Though Julia fancies she prefers tragedy,

I would not trust her in it. There is nothing of tragedy about her. She has not the look of it. Her features are not tragic features, and she walks too quick, and speaks too quick, and would not keep her countenance. She had better do the old countrywoman—the Cottager's wife; you had, indeed, Julia. Cottager's wife is a very pretty part, I assure you. The old lady relieves the high-flown benevolence of her husband with a good deal of spirit. You shall be Cottager's wife.'

'Cottager's wife!' cried Mr. Yates. 'What are you talking of? The most trivial, paltry, insignificant part; the merest commonplace; not a tolerable speech in the whole. Your sister do that! It is an insult to propose it. At Ecclesford the governess was to have done it. We all agreed that it could not be offered to anybody else. A little more justice, Mr. Manager, if you please. You do not deserve the office if you cannot appreciate the talents of your company a little better.'

'Why as to *that*, my good friend, till I and my company have really acted there must be some guesswork; but I mean no disparagement to Julia. We cannot have two Agathas, and we must have one Cottager's wife; and I am sure I set her the example of moderation myself in being satisfied with the old Butler. If the part is trifling, she will have more credit in making something of it; and if she is so desperately bent against everything humorous, let her take Cottager's speeches instead of Cottager's wife's, and so change the parts all through; *he* is solemn and pathetic enough, I am sure. It could make no difference in the play; and as for Cottager himself, when he has got his

wife's speeches, *I* would undertake him with all my heart.'

'With all your partiality for Cottager's wife,' said Henry Crawford, 'it will be impossible to make anything of it fit for your sister, and we must not suffer her good nature to be imposed on. We must not *allow* her to accept the part. She must not be left to her own complaisance. Her talents will be wanted in Amelia. Amelia is a character more difficult to be well represented than even Agatha. I consider Amelia as the most difficult character in the whole piece. It requires great powers, great nicety, to give her playfulness and simplicity without extravagance. I have seen good actresses fail in the part. Simplicity, indeed, is beyond the reach of almost every actress by profession. It requires a delicacy of feeling which they have not. It requires a gentlewoman—a Julia Bertram. You *will* undertake it, I hope?' turning to her with a look of anxious entreaty, which softened her a little; but while she hesitated what to say, her brother again interposed with Miss Crawford's better claim.

'No, no, Julia must not be Amelia. It is not at all the part for her. She would not like it. She would not do well. She is too tall and robust. Amelia should be a small, light, girlish, skipping figure. It is fit for Miss Crawford, and Miss Crawford only. She looks the part, and I am persuaded will do it admirably.'

Without attending to this, Henry Crawford continued his supplication. 'You must oblige us,' said he, 'indeed you must. When you have studied the character, I am sure you will feel it suit you.'

Tragedy may be your choice, but it will certainly appear that comedy chooses *you*. You will have to visit me in prison with a basket of provisions; you will not refuse to visit me in prison? I think I see you coming in with your basket.'

The influence of his voice was felt. Julia wavered; but was he only trying to soothe and pacify her, and make her overlook the previous affront? She distrusted him. The slight had been most determined. He was, perhaps, but at treacherous play with her. She looked suspiciously at her sister; Maria's countenance was to decide it; if she were vexed and alarmed—but Maria looked all serenity and satisfaction, and Julia well knew that on this ground Maria could not be happy but at her expense. With hasty indignation, therefore, and a tremulous voice, she said to him, 'You do not seem afraid of not keeping your countenance when I come in with a basket of provisions—though one might have supposed—but it is only as Agatha that I was to be so overpowering!' She stopped, Henry Crawford looked rather foolish, and as if he did not know what to say. Tom Bertram began again—

'Miss Crawford must be Amelia. She will be an excellent Amelia.'

'Do not be afraid of *my* wanting the character, cried Julia, with angry quickness; 'I am *not* to be Agatha, and I am sure I will do nothing else; and as to Amelia, it is of all parts in the world the most disgusting to me. I quite detest her. An odious, little, pert, unnatural, impudent girl. I have always protested against comedy, and this is comedy in its worst form.' And so saying, she walked hastily out of the room.

FANNY GOES OUT TO DINNER

Simple as such an engagement might appear in other eyes, it had novelty and importance in hers, for, excepting the day at Sotherton, she had scarcely ever dined out before; and though now going only half a mile, and only to three people, still it was dining out, and all the little interests of preparation were enjoyments in themselves. She had neither sympathy nor assistance from those who ought to have entered into her feelings and directed her taste; for Lady Bertram never thought of being useful to anybody, and Mrs. Norris, when she came on the morrow, in consequence of an early call and invitation from Sir Thomas, was in a very ill-humour, and seemed intent only on lessening her niece's pleasure, both present and future, as much as possible.

'Upon my word, Fanny, you are in high luck to meet with such attention and indulgence! You ought to be very much obliged to Mrs. Grant for thinking of you, and to your aunt for letting you go, and you ought to look upon it as something extraordinary; for I hope you are aware that there is no real occasion for your going into company in this sort of way, or ever dining out at all; and it is what you must not depend upon ever being repeated. Nor must you be fancying that the invitation is meant as any particular compliment to *you*; the compliment is intended to your uncle and aunt, and me. Mrs. Grant thinks it a civility due to *us* to take a little notice of you, or else it would never have come into her head, and you may be very certain that, if your cousin Julia had been at home, you would not have been asked at all.'

Mrs. Norris had now so ingeniously done away all Mrs. Grant's part of the favour that Fanny, who found herself expected to speak, could only say that she was very much obliged to her aunt Bertram for sparing her, and that she was endeavouring to put her aunt's evening work in such a state as to prevent her being missed.

'Oh! depend upon it, your aunt can do very well without you, or you would not be allowed to go. I shall be here, so you may be quite easy about your aunt. And I hope you will have a very agreeable day and find it all mighty *delightful*. But I must observe that five is the very awkwardest of all possible numbers to sit down to table; and I cannot but be surprised that such an *elegant* lady as Mrs. Grant should not contrive better! And round their enormous great wide table, too, which fills up the room so dreadfully! Had the Doctor been contented to take my dining-table when I came away, as anybody in their senses would have done, instead of having that absurd new one of his own, which is wider, literally wider, than the dinner-table here, how infinitely better it would have been! and how much more he would have been respected! for people are never respected when they step out of their proper sphere. Remember *that*, Fanny. Five, only five to be sitting round that table! However, you will have dinner enough on it for ten, I dare say.'

Mrs. Norris fetched breath and went on again.

'The nonsense and folly of people's stepping out of their rank, and trying to appear above themselves, makes me think it right to give *you* a hint, Fanny, now that you are going into company with-

out any of us; and I do beseech and entreat you not to be putting yourself forward, and talking and giving your opinion as if you were one of your cousins, as if you were dear Mrs. Rushworth or Julia. *That* will never do, believe me. Remember, wherever you are, you must be the lowest and last; and though Miss Crawford is in a manner at home at the Parsonage, you are not to be taking place of her. And as to coming away at night, you are to stay just as long as Edmund chooses. Leave him to settle *that*.'

'Yes, ma'am, I should not think of anything else.

'And if it should rain, which I think exceedingly likely, for I never saw it more threatening for a wet evening in my life, you must manage as well as you can, and not be expecting the carriage to be sent for you. I certainly do not go home to-night, and, therefore, the carriage will not be out on my account; so you must make up your mind to what may happen, and take your things accordingly.'

Her niece thought it perfectly reasonable. She rated her own claims to comfort as low even as Mrs. Norris could; and when Sir Thomas, soon afterwards, just opening the door, said, 'Fanny, at what time would you have the carriage come round?' she felt a degree of astonishment which made it impossible for her to speak.

'My dear Sir Thomas!' cried Mrs. Norris, red with anger, 'Fanny can walk.'

'Walk!' repeated Sir Thomas, in a tone of most unanswerable dignity, and coming farther into the room. 'My niece walk to a dinner engagement at this time of the year! Will twenty minutes after four suit you?'

wished—but it is so little one can venture to do—small, trifling presents, of anything uncommon. Now we have killed a porker, and Emma thinks of sending them a loin or a leg; it is very small and delicate—Hartfield pork is not like any other pork—but still it is pork; and, my dear Emma, unless one could be sure of their making it into steaks, nicely fried, as ours are fried, without the smallest grease, and not roast it—for no stomach can bear roast pork—I think we had better send the leg: do not you think so, my dear?’

‘My dear papa, I sent the whole hind-quarter. I knew you would wish it. There will be the leg to be salted, you know, which is so very nice, and the loin to be dressed directly in any manner they like.’

‘That’s right, my dear, very right. I had not thought of it before, but that was the best way. They must not over-salt the leg; and then, if it is not over-salted, and if it is very thoroughly boiled, just as Serle boils ours, and eaten very moderately of, with a boiled turnip, and a little carrot or parsnip, I do not consider it unwholesome.’

‘Emma,’ said Mr. Knightley presently, ‘I have a piece of news for you. You like news; and I heard an article in my way hither that I think will interest you.’

‘News! Oh! yes, I always like news. What is it? why do you smile so? where did you hear it? At Randalls?’

He had only time to say:

‘No, not at Randalls; I have not been near Randalls,’ when the door was thrown open, and Miss Bates and Miss Fairfax walked into the room. Full of thanks and full of news, Miss Bates knew not

which to give quickest. Mr. Knightley soon saw that he had lost his moment, and that not another syllable of communication could rest with him.

'Oh! my dear sir, how are you this morning? My dear Miss Woodhouse, I come quite overpowered. Such a beautiful hind-quarter of pork! You are too bountiful! Have you heard the news? Mr. Elton is going to be married.'

Emma had not had time even to think of Mr. Elton, and she was so completely surprised that she could not avoid a little start, and a little blush, at the sound.

'There is my news: I thought it would interest you,' said Mr. Knightley, with a smile which implied a conviction of some part of what had passed between them.

'But where could *you* hear it?' cried Miss Bates. 'Where could you possibly hear it, Mr. Knightley? For it is not five minutes since I received Mrs. Cole's note; no, it cannot be more than five, or, at least, ten; for I had got my bonnet and spencer¹ on, just ready to come out. I was only gone down to speak to Patty again about the pork—Jane was standing in the passage: were not you, Jane?—for my mother was so afraid that we had not any salting-pan large enough. So I said I would go down and see, and Jane said, "Shall I go down instead? for I think you have a little cold, and Patty has been washing the kitchen." "Oh! my dear," said I—well; and just then came the note. A Miss Hawkins—that's all I know. A Miss Hawkins of Bath. But, Mr. Knightley, how could you possibly have heard it? for the very moment Mr. Cole told Mrs.

¹ A short jacket.

what was necessary, told that he understood, and the papers swept away; 'particularly pleasant. You and Miss Fairfax gave us some very good music. I do not know a more luxurious state, sir, than sitting at one's ease to be entertained a whole evening by two such young women, sometimes with music and sometimes with conversation. I am sure Miss Fairfax must have found the evening pleasant, Emma. You left nothing undone. I was glad you made her play so much, for, having no instrument at her grandmother's, it must have been a real indulgence.'

'I am happy you approved,' said Emma, smiling; 'but I hope I am not often deficient in what is due to guests at Hartfield.'

'No, my dear,' said her father instantly; '*that* I am sure you are not. There is nobody half so attentive and civil as you are. If anything, you are too attentive. The muffin last night—if it had been handed round once, I think it would have been enough.'

'No,' said Mr. Knightley, nearly at the same time, 'you are not often deficient; not often deficient either in manner or comprehension. I think you understand me, therefore.'

An arch look expressed, 'I understand you well enough'; but she said only, 'Miss Fairfax is reserved.'

'I always told you she was—a little; but you will soon overcome all that part of her reserve which ought to be overcome, all that has its foundation in diffidence. What arises from discretion must be honoured.'

'You think her diffident. I do not see it.'

'My dear Emma,' said he, moving from his chair into one close by her, 'you are not going to tell me, I hope, that you had not a pleasant evening.'

'Oh! no; I was pleased with my own perseverance in asking questions, and amused to think how little information I obtained.'

'I am disappointed,' was his only answer.

'I hope everybody had a pleasant evening,' said Mr. Woodhouse, in his quiet way. 'I had. Once, I felt the fire rather too much; but then I moved back my chair a little, a very little, and it did not disturb me. Miss Bates was very chatty and good-humoured, as she always is, though she speaks rather too quick. However, she is very agreeable, and Mrs. Bates too, in a different way. I like old friends; and Miss Jane Fairfax is a very pretty sort of young lady, a very pretty and a very well-behaved young lady indeed. She must have found the evening agreeable, Mr. Knightley, because she had Emma.'

'True, sir; and Emma, because she had Miss Fairfax.'

Emma saw his anxiety, and wishing to appease it, at least for the present, said, and with a sincerity which no one could question:

'She is a sort of elegant creature that one cannot keep one's eyes from. I am always watching her to admire; and I do pity her from my heart.'

Mr. Knightley looked as if he were more gratified than he cared to express; and before he could make any reply, Mr. Woodhouse, whose thoughts were on the Bates, said:

'It is a great pity that their circumstances should be so confined! a great pity indeed! and I have often

Cole of it, she sat down and wrote to me. A Miss Hawkins——’

‘I was with Mr. Cole on business an hour and a half ago. He had just read Elton’s letter as I was shown in, and handed it to me directly.’

‘Well! that is quite—I suppose there never was a piece of news more generally interesting. My dear sir, you really are too bountiful. My mother desires her very best compliments and regards, and a thousand thanks, and says you really quite oppress her.’

‘We consider our Hartfield pork,’ replied Mr. Woodhouse, ‘—indeed it certainly is—so very superior to all other pork that Emma and I cannot have a greater pleasure than——’

‘Oh! my dear sir, as my mother says, our friends are only too good to us. If ever there were people who, without having great wealth themselves, had everything they could wish for, I am sure it is us. We may well say that “our lot is cast in a goodly heritage.” Well, Mr. Knightley, and so you actually saw the letter; well——’

‘It was short—merely to announce—but cheerful, exulting, of course.’ Here was a sly glance at Emma. ‘He had been so fortunate as to—I forget the precise words, one has no business to remember them. The information was, as you state, that he was going to be married to a Miss Hawkins. By his style, I should imagine it just settled.’

‘Mr. Elton going to be married!’ said Emma, as soon as she could speak. ‘He will have everybody’s wishes for his happiness.’

‘He is very young to settle,’ was Mr. Woodhouse’s observation. ‘He had better not be in a

hurry. He seemed to me very well off as he was. We were always glad to see him at Hartfield.'

'A new neighbour for us all, Miss Woodhouse!' said Miss Bates, joyfully; 'my mother is so pleased! She says she cannot bear to have the poor old Vicarage without a mistress. This is great news, indeed. Jane, you have never seen Mr. Elton! No wonder that you have such a curiosity to see him.'

Jane's curiosity did not appear of that absorbing nature as wholly to occupy her.

'No, I have never seen Mr. Elton,' she replied, starting on this appeal; 'is he—is he a tall man?'

'Who shall answer that question?' cried Emma. 'My father would say "yes"; Mr. Knightley, "no"; and Miss Bates and I that he is just the happy medium. When you have been here a little longer, Miss Fairfax, you will understand that Mr. Elton is the standard of perfection in Highbury, both in person and mind.'

'Very true, Miss Woodhouse, so she will. He is the very best young man. But, my dear Jane, if you remember, I told you yesterday he was precisely the height of Mr. Perry. Miss Hawkins—I dare say, an excellent young woman. His extreme attention to my mother, wanting her to sit in the Vicarage-pew, that she might hear the better, for my mother is a little deaf, you know—it is not much, but she does not hear quite quick. Jane says that Colonel Campbell is a little deaf. He fancied bathing might be good for it—the warm bath; but she says it did him no lasting benefit. Colonel Campbell, you know, is quite our angel. And Mr. Dixon seems a very charming young man, quite worthy of him. It is such a happiness when good

people get together; and they always do. Now, here will be Mr. Elton and Miss Hawkins; and there are the Coles, such very good people; and the Perrys—I suppose there never was a happier or a better couple than Mr. and Mrs. Perry. I say, sir,' turning to Mr. Woodhouse, 'I think there are few places with such society as Highbury. I always say we are quite blessed in our neighbours. My dear sir, if there is one thing my mother loves better than another, it is pork, a roast loin of pork——'

'As to who or what Miss Hawkins is, or how long he has been acquainted with her,' said Emma, 'nothing I suppose can be known. One feels that it cannot be a very long acquaintance. He has been gone only four weeks.'

Nobody had any information to give; and, after a few more wonderings, Emma said:

'You are silent, Miss Fairfax, but I hope you mean to take an interest in this news. You, who have been hearing and seeing so much of late on these subjects, who must have been so deep in the business on Miss Campbell's account—we shall not excuse your being indifferent about Mr. Elton and Miss Hawkins.'

'When I have seen Mr. Elton,' replied Jane, 'I dare say I shall be interested, but I believe it requires *that* with me. And, as it is some months since Miss Campbell married, the impression may be a little worn off.'

'Yes, he has been gone just four weeks, as you observe, Miss Woodhouse,' said Miss Bates, 'four weeks yesterday. A Miss Hawkins. Well, I had always rather fancied it would be some young lady hereabouts; not that I ever—Mrs. Cole once

whispered to me; but I immediately said, "No, Mr. Elton is a most worthy young man; but, in short, I do not think I am particularly quick at those sort of discoveries. I do not pretend to it. What is before me, I see. At the same time, nobody could wonder if Mr. Elton should have aspired"—Miss Woodhouse lets me chatter on, so good-humouredly. She knows I would not offend for the world. How does Miss Smith do? She seems quite recovered now. Have you heard from Mrs. John Knightley lately? Oh! those dear little children. Jane, do you know I always fancy Mr. Dixon like Mr. John Knightley? I mean in person—tall, and with that sort of look, and not very talkative.'

'Quite wrong, my dear aunt: there is no likeness at all.'

'Very odd! but one never does form a just idea of anybody beforehand. One takes up a notion, and runs away with it. Mr. Dixon, you say, is not, strictly speaking, handsome.'

'Handsome! Oh no! far from it—certainly plain. I told you he was plain.'

'My dear, you said that Miss Campbell would not allow him to be plain, and that you yourself——'

'Oh! as for me, my judgment is worth nothing. Where I have a regard, I always think a person well-looking. But I gave what I believed the general opinion when I called him plain.'

'Well, my dear Jane, I believe we must be running away. The weather does not look well, and grandmamma will be uneasy. You are too obliging, my dear Miss Woodhouse; but we really must take leave. This has been a most agreeable piece of news, indeed. I shall just go round by Mrs. Cole's;

but I shall not stop three minutes: and, Jane, you had better go home directly. I would not have you out in a shower! We think she is the better for Highbury already. Thank you, we do indeed. I shall not attempt calling on Mrs. Goddard, for I really do not think she cares for anything but *boiled* pork: when we dress the leg it will be another thing. Good morning to you, my dear sir. Oh! Mr. Knightley is coming too. Well, that is so very!—I am sure if Jane is tired, you will be so kind as to give her your arm. Mr. Elton, and Miss Hawkins, good morning to you.'

AN INVITATION FROM MISS BATES

Voices approached the shop, or rather one voice and two ladies; Mrs. Weston and Miss Bates met them at the door.

'My dear Miss Woodhouse,' said the latter, 'I am just run across to entreat the favour of you to come and sit down with us a little while, and give us your opinion of our new instrument; you and Miss Smith. How do you do, Miss Smith?'

'Very well, I thank you.'

'And I begged Mrs. Weston to come with me, that I might be sure of succeeding.'

'I hope Mrs. Bates and Miss Fairfax are——'

'Very well, I am much obliged to you. My mother is delightfully well; and Jane caught no cold last night. How is Mr. Woodhouse? I am so glad to hear such a good account. Mrs. Weston told me you were here. Oh! then, said I, I must run across. I am sure Miss Woodhouse will allow me just to run across and entreat her to come in; my mother will be so very happy to see her and,

now we are such a nice party, she cannot refuse. "Aye, pray do," said Mr. Frank Churchill, "Miss Woodhouse's opinion of the instrument will be worth having." "But," said I, "I shall be more sure of succeeding if one of you will go with me." "Oh!" said he, "wait half a minute till I have finished my job." For, would you believe it, Miss Woodhouse? there he is, in the most obliging manner in the world, fastening in the rivet of my mother's spectacles. The rivet came out, you know, this morning. So very obliging! For my mother had no use of her spectacles—could not put them on. And, by the bye, everybody ought to have two pair of spectacles; they should indeed. Jane said so. I meant to take them over to John Saunders the first thing, I did, but something or other hindered me all the morning; first one thing, then another; there is no saying what, you know. At one time Patty came to say she thought the kitchen chimney wanted sweeping. "Oh!" said I, "Patty, do not come with your bad news to me. Here is the rivet of your mistress's spectacles out." Then the baked apples came home. Mrs. Wallis sent them by her boy; they are extremely civil and obliging to us, the Wallises, always. I have heard some people say that Mrs. Wallis can be uncivil and give a very rude answer, but we have never known anything but the greatest attention from them. And it cannot be for the value of our custom now, for what is our consumption of bread, you know? Only three of us, besides dear Jane at present; and she really eats nothing—makes such a shocking breakfast, you would be quite frightened if you saw it. I dare not let my mother know how little

she eats. So I say one thing and then I say another, and it passes off. But about the middle of the day she gets hungry, and there is nothing she likes so well as these baked apples, and they are extremely wholesome, for I took the opportunity the other day of asking Mr. Perry; I happened to meet him in the street. Not that I had any doubt before; I have so often heard Mr. Woodhouse recommend a baked apple. I believe it is the only way that Mr. Woodhouse thinks the fruit thoroughly wholesome. We have apple dumplings, however, very often. Patty makes an excellent apple-dumpling. Well, Mrs. Weston, you have prevailed, I hope, and these ladies will oblige us.'

Emma would be 'very happy to wait on Mrs. Bates, etc.' and they did at last move out of the shop, with no further delay from Miss Bates than:

'How do you do, Mrs. Ford? I beg your pardon, I did not see you before. I hear you have a charming collection of new ribbons from town. Jane came back delighted yesterday. Thank ye, the gloves do very well—only a little too large about the wrist; but Jane is taking them in.'

'What was I talking of?' said she, beginning again when they were all in the street.

Emma wondered on what, of all the medley, she would fix.

'I declare I cannot recollect what I was talking of. Oh! my mother's spectacles. So very obliging of Mr. Frank Churchill! "Oh!" said he, "I do think I can fasten the rivet; I like a job of this kind excessively." Which, you know, showed him to be so very . . . Indeed I must say that, much as I had heard of him before and much as I had expected,

he far exceeds anything . . . I do congratulate you, Mrs. Weston, most warmly. He seems everything the fondest parent could . . . "Oh!" said he, "I can fasten the rivet. I like a job of that sort excessively." I shall never forget his manner. And when I brought out the baked apples from the closet, and hoped our friends would be so very obliging as to take some, "Oh!" said he directly, "there is nothing in the way of fruit half so good, and these are the finest-looking home-baked apples I ever saw in my life." That, you know, was so very . . . And I am sure, by his manner, it was no compliment. Indeed they are very delightful apples, and Mrs. Wallis does them full justice—only we do not have them baked more than twice, and Mr. Woodhouse made us promise to have them done three times; but Miss Woodhouse will be so good as not to mention it. The apples themselves are the very finest sort for baking, beyond a doubt; all from Donwell—some of Mr. Knightley's most liberal supply. He sends us a sack every year; and certainly there never was such a keeping apple anywhere as one of his trees—I believe there is two of them. My mother says the orchard was always famous in her younger days. But I was really quite shocked the other day, for Mr. Knightley called one morning, and Jane was eating these apples, and we talked about them and said how much she enjoyed them, and he asked whether we were not got to the end of our stock. "I am sure you must be," said he, "and I will send you another supply; for I have a great many more than I can ever use. William Larkins let me keep a larger quantity than usual this year. I will send you some

more, before they get good for nothing." So I begged he would not—for really as to ours being gone, I could not absolutely say that we had a great many left—it was but half a dozen indeed; but they should be all kept for Jane; and I could not at all bear that he should be sending us more, so liberal as he had been already; and Jane said the same. And when he was gone, she almost quarrelled with me. No, I should not say quarrelled, for we never had a quarrel in our lives; but she was quite distressed that I had owned the apples were so nearly gone; she wished I had made him believe we had a great many left. "Oh!" said I, "my dear, I did say as much as I could." However, the very same evening William Larkins came over with a large basket of apples, the same sort of apples, a bushel at least, and I was very much obliged, and went down and spoke to William Larkins and said everything, as you may suppose. William Larkins is such an old acquaintance! I am always glad to see him. But, however, I found afterwards from Patty, that William said it was all the apples of *that* sort his master had; he had brought them all, and now his master had not one left to bake or boil. William did not seem to mind it himself, he was so pleased to think his master had sold so many; for William, you know, thinks more of his master's profit than anything; but Mrs. Hodges, he said, was quite displeased at their being all sent away. She could not bear that her master should not be able to have another apple-tart this spring. He told Patty this, but bid her not mind it, and be sure not to say anything to us about it, for Mrs. Hodges *would* be cross sometimes, and as long as so many sacks were

sold, it did not signify who ate the remainder. And so Patty told me, and I was excessively shocked indeed! I would not have Mr. Knightley know anything about it for the world! He would be so very . . . I wanted to keep it from Jane's knowledge; but unluckily, I had mentioned it before I was aware.'

Miss Bates had just done as Patty opened the door; and her visitors walked upstairs without having any regular narration to attend to, pursued only by the sounds of her desultory goodwill.

'Pray take care, Mrs. Weston, there is a step at the turning. Pray take care, Miss Woodhouse, ours is rather a dark staircase—rather darker and narrower than one could wish. Miss Smith, pray take care. Miss Woodhouse, I am quite concerned, I am sure you hit your foot. Miss Smith, the step at the turning.'

AT THE BALL

The ball proceeded pleasantly. The anxious cares, the incessant attentions of Mrs. Weston, were not thrown away. Everybody seemed happy; and the praise of being a delightful ball, which is seldom bestowed till after a ball has ceased to be, was repeatedly given in the very beginning of the existence of this. Of very important, very recordable events, it was not more productive than such meetings usually are. There was one, however, which Emma thought something of. The two last dances before supper were begun, and Harriet had no partner; the only young lady sitting down; and so equal had been hitherto the number of dancers that how there could be anyone disengaged was the

wonder! But Emma's wonder lessened soon afterwards, on seeing Mr. Elton sauntering about. He would not ask Harriet to dance if it were possible to be avoided; she was sure he would not; and she was expecting him every moment to escape into the card-room.

Escape, however, was not his plan. He came to the part of the room where the sitters-by were collected, spoke to some, and walked about in front of them, as if to show his liberty, and his resolution of maintaining it. He did not omit being sometimes directly before Miss Smith, or speaking to those who were close to her. Emma saw it. She was not yet dancing; she was working her way up from the bottom, and had therefore leisure to look around, and by only turning her head a little she saw it all. When she was half-way up the set, the whole group were exactly behind her, and she would no longer allow her eyes to watch; but Mr. Elton was so near that she heard every syllable of a dialogue which just then took place between him and Mrs. Weston; and she perceived that his wife, who was standing immediately above her, was not only listening also, but even encouraging him by significant glances. The kind-hearted, gentle Mrs. Weston had left her seat to join him and say, 'Do not you dance, Mr. Elton?' to which his prompt reply was, 'Most readily, Mrs. Weston, if you will dance with me.'

'Me! Oh no! I would get you a better partner than myself. I am no dancer.'

'If Mrs. Gilbert wishes to dance,' said he, 'I shall have great pleasure, I am sure, for, though beginning to feel myself rather an old married man,

and that my dancing days are over, it would give me very great pleasure at any time to stand up with an old friend like Mrs. Gilbert.'

'Mrs. Gilbert does not mean to dance, but there is a young lady disengaged whom I should be very glad to see dancing—Miss Smith.'

'Miss Smith! Oh! I had not observed. You are extremely obliging, and if I were not an old married man—but my dancing days are over, Mrs. Weston. You will excuse me. Anything else I should be most happy to do, at your command; but my dancing days are over.'

Mrs. Weston said no more; and Emma could imagine with what surprise and mortification she must be returning to her seat. This was Mr. Elton! the amiable, obliging, gentle Mr. Elton. She looked round for a moment; he had joined Mr. Knightley at a little distance, and was arranging himself for settled conversation, while smiles of high glee passed between him and his wife.

She would not look again. Her heart was in a glow, and she feared her face might be as hot.

In another moment a happier sight caught her: Mr. Knightley leading Harriet to the set! Never had she been more surprised, seldom more delighted, than at that instant. She was all pleasure and gratitude, both for Harriet and herself, and longed to be thanking him; and though too distant for speech, her countenance said much, as soon as she could catch his eye again.

His dancing proved to be just what she had believed it, extremely good; and Harriet would

have seemed almost too lucky, if it had not been for the cruel state of things before, and for the very complete enjoyment, and very high sense of the distinction, which her happy features announced. It was not thrown away on her, she bounded higher than ever, flew farther down the middle, and was in a continual course of smiles.

Mr. Elton had retreated into the card-room, looking (Emma trusted) very foolish. She did not think he was quite so hardened as his wife, though growing very like her; *she* spoke some of her feelings, by observing audibly to her partner:

‘Knightley has taken pity on poor little Miss Smith! Very good-natured, I declare.’

Supper was announced. The move began; and Miss Bates might be heard from that moment, without interruption, till her being seated at table and taking up her spoon.

‘Jane, Jane, my dear Jane, where are you? Here is your tippet. Mrs. Weston begs you to put on your tippet. She says she is afraid there will be draughts in the passage, though everything has been done. One door nailed up. Quantities of matting. My dear Jane, indeed you must. Mr. Churchill, oh! you are too obliging! How well you put it on! So gratified! Excellent dancing indeed! Yes, my dear, I ran home, as I said I should, to help grandmamma to bed, and got back again, and nobody missed me. I set off without saying a word, just as I told you. Grandmamma was quite well, had a charming evening with Mr. Woodhouse, a vast deal of chat, and backgammon. Tea was made downstairs, biscuits and baked apples and wine before she came away; amazing luck in

some of her throws; and she inquired a great deal about you, how you were amused, and who were your partners. "Oh!" said I, "I shall not forestall Jane; I left her dancing with Mr. George Otway; she will love to tell you all about it herself to-morrow: her first partner was Mr. Elton, I do not know who will ask her next, perhaps Mr. William Cox." My dear sir, you are too obliging. Is there nobody you would not rather? I am not helpless. Sir, you are most kind. Upon my word, Jane on one arm, and me on the other! Stop, stop, let us stand a little back, Mrs. Elton is going; dear Mrs. Elton, how elegant she looks! Beautiful lace! Now we all follow in her train. Quite the queen of the evening! Well, here we are at the passage. Two steps, Jane, take care of the two steps. Oh! no, there is but one. Well, I was persuaded there were two. How very odd! I was convinced there were two, and there is but one. I never saw anything equal to the comfort and style. Candles everywhere. I was telling you or your grandmamma, Jane, there was a little disappointment. The baked apples and biscuits, excellent in their way, you know; but there was a delicate fricassee of sweetbread and some asparagus brought in first, and good Mr. Woodhouse, not thinking the asparagus quite boiled enough, sent it all out again. Now there is nothing grandmamma loves better than sweetbread and asparagus; so she was rather disappointed, but we agreed we would not speak of it to anybody, for fear of its getting round to dear Miss Woodhouse, who would be so very much concerned! Well, this is brilliant! I am all amazement! could not have supposed anything!

Such elegance and profusion! I have seen nothing like it since—Well, where shall we sit? Anywhere, so that Jane is not in a draught. Where *I* sit is of no consequence. Oh! do you recommend this side? Well, I am sure, Mr. Churchill—only it seems too good; but just as you please. What you direct in this house cannot be wrong. Dear Jane, how shall we ever recollect half the dishes for grandmamma? Soup too! Bless me! I should not be helped so soon, but it smells most excellent, and I cannot help beginning.'

Emma had no opportunity of speaking to Mr. Knightley till after supper; but, when they were all in the ball-room again, her eyes invited him irresistibly to come to her and be thanked. He was warm in his reprobation of Mr. Elton's conduct; it had been unpardonable rudeness; and Mrs. Elton's looks also received the due share of censure.

'They aimed at wounding more than Harriet,' said he. 'Emma, why is it that they are your enemies?'

He looked with smiling penetration; and, on receiving no answer, added, '*She* ought not to be angry with you, I suspect, whatever he may be. To that surmise, you say nothing, of course; but confess, Emma, that you did want him to marry Harriet.'

'I did,' replied Emma, 'and they cannot forgive me.'

He shook his head; but there was a smile of indulgence with it, and he only said:

'I shall not scold you. I leave you to your own reflections.'

'Can you trust me with such flatterers? Does my vain spirit ever tell me I am wrong?'

'Not your vain spirit, but your serious spirit. If one leads you wrong, I am sure the other tells you of it.'

'I do own myself to have been completely mistaken in Mr. Elton. There is a littleness about him which you discovered, and which I did not: and I was fully convinced of his being in love with Harriet. It was through a series of strange blunders.'

'And, in return for your acknowledging so much, I will do you the justice to say, that you would have chosen for him better than he has chosen for himself. Harriet Smith has some first-rate qualities, which Mrs. Elton is totally without. An unpretending, single-minded, artless girl—ininitely to be preferred by any man of sense and taste to such a woman as Mrs. Elton. I found Harriet more conversable than I expected.'

Emma was extremely gratified. They were interrupted by the bustle of Mr. Weston calling on everybody to begin dancing again.

'Come, Miss Woodhouse, Miss Otway, Miss Fairfax, what are you all doing? Come, Emma, set your companions the example. Everybody is lazy! Everybody is asleep!'

'I am ready,' said Emma, 'whenever I am wanted.'

'Whom are you going to dance with?' asked Mr. Knightley.

She hesitated a moment, and then replied, 'With you, if you will ask me.'

'Will you?' said he, offering his hand.

‘Indeed, I will. You have shown that you can dance, and you know we are not really so much brother and sister as to make it at all improper.’

‘Brother and sister! No, indeed.’

PERSUASION

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

SIR WALTER ELLIOT, of Kellynch Hall, Somerset.

ELIZABETH
MARY
ANNE } his daughters.

MR. WILLIAM ELLIOT, their cousin and Sir Walter's heir.

MR. CHARLES MUSGROVE (married to Mary Elliot), of Upper-cross Cottage.

HENRIETTA
LOUISA } his sisters.

ADMIRAL CROFT.

MRS. CROFT, his wife.

CAPTAIN FREDERICK WENTWORTH, brother to Mrs. Croft.

LADY RUSSELL, of Kellynch Lodge, a friend of Anne Elliot.

CAPTAIN BENWICK, a friend of Captain Wentworth.

THE DOWAGER LADY DALRYMPLE.

MISS CARTERET, her daughter.

THE STORY

Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch Hall, Somerset, was a man who never, for his own amusement, took up any book but the Baronetage, in which, to please his vanity, he could read the history of his family. Vanity was the beginning and end of his character. When the story begins, his wife had been dead some years. She had left him with three daughters—Elizabeth (who had inherited all her father's pride), Mary (who had married Charles Musgrove), and Anne (who was 'only Anne'). More than seven years before, Anne had been engaged to Captain Frederick Wentworth. But Sir Walter thought him not worthy to be allied to the great house of Elliot. Captain Wentworth had neither fortune nor influence: he had, indeed, nothing but himself to recommend him. Under

the united 'persuasion' of Sir Walter and his friend Lady Russell, Anne had broken off the engagement.

Time went by, and Sir Walter found himself in debt and short of money. He was too proud to remain at Kellynch and retrench. He decided to let the place—to Admiral Croft, who had fought at Trafalgar. Admiral Croft had a wife, and the wife had a brother—Captain Frederick Wentworth.

Sir Walter and his daughter Elizabeth went to Bath, but Anne remained in the neighbourhood of Kellynch in order to be with her married sister, Mary Musgrove, at Uppercross Cottage (see page 194). Naturally she soon encountered Admiral and Mrs. Croft, and, before long, Captain Wentworth himself. Captain Wentworth soon made friends with Charles Musgrove, and with his sisters who lived near by. Anne was thus constantly in his society. But Captain Wentworth had not forgiven her for her rejection of him: he was nursing his pride. He wanted to marry; his heart was ready for either of the Miss Musgroves, if they could catch it. 'Anybody,' said he, 'between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking.'

One day he made up a party to visit Lyme (see page 198). There Louisa Musgrove met with an accident, and the agitation shown by Captain Wentworth convinced Anne that Louisa had replaced her in his affections. Shortly afterwards Anne joined her father and sister in Bath. There she met Mr. William Elliot, her cousin, who was Sir Walter's heir. Here, thought Lady Russell, was the man Anne ought to marry. For a moment Anne thought so too, tempted by the idea of having Kellynch once more for her home. Then she remembered Captain Wentworth, the man she loved.

She had been in Bath a month when she heard from her sister Mary that Louisa Musgrove was engaged, not to Captain Wentworth, but to a friend of his, Captain Benwick. Then Captain Wentworth came to Bath, but it was he who was embarrassed at their meeting, not Anne. At a concert in the Assembly Rooms where all the great ones of Bath were gathered (see page 204), Captain Wentworth walked in alone. Anne was with her father and sister. Captain Wentworth would have passed her by with a bow. But Anne spoke to him, and even Sir Walter and Elizabeth condescended to spare him a bow.

This was a different Captain Wentworth to the one Anne had met at Uppercross. His resentment was going—gone: he was the

Captain Wentworth of seven years ago: the man who loved her. Before many days had run, 'they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy in reunion' than they had been before. To a Captain Wentworth who had £25,000 and stood high in his profession, Sir Walter had no objection to make. Elizabeth did nothing worse than look cold and unconcerned. But Anne 'gloried in being a sailor's wife.'

AN IMAGINARY INVALID

. . . it was rather a surprise to her to find Mary alone; but being alone, her being unwell and out of spirits, was almost a matter of course. Though better endowed than the elder sister, Mary had not Anne's understanding or temper. While well, and happy, and properly attended to, she had great good-humour and excellent spirits; but any indisposition sunk her completely; she had no resources for solitude; and inheriting a considerable amount of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used. In person, she was inferior to both sisters, and had, even in her bloom, only reached the dignity of being 'a fine girl.' She was now lying on the faded sofa of the pretty little drawing-room, the once elegant furniture of which had been gradually growing shabby under the influence of four summers and two children; and, on Anne's appearing, greeted her with:

'So, you are come at last! I began to think I should never see you. I am so ill I can hardly speak. I have not seen a creature the whole morning!'

'I am sorry to find you unwell,' replied Anne. 'You sent me such a good account of yourself on Thursday!'

'Yes, I made the best of it; I always do; but I was

very far from well at the time; and I do not think I ever was so ill in my life as I have been all this morning—very unfit to be left alone, I am sure. Suppose I were to be seized of a sudden in some dreadful way, and not able to ring the bell! So, Lady Russell would not get out. I do not think she has been in this house three times this summer.'

Anne said what was proper, and inquired after her husband. 'Oh! Charles is out shooting. I have not seen him since seven o'clock. He would go, though I told him how ill I was. He said he should not stay out long; but he has never come back, and now it is almost one. I assure you I have not seen a soul this whole morning.'

'You have had your little boys with you?'

'Yes, as long as I could bear their noise; but they are so unmanageable that they do me more harm than good. Little Charles does not mind a word I say, and Walter is growing quite as bad.'

'Well, you will soon be better now,' replied Anne cheerfully. 'You know I always cure you when I come. How are your neighbours at the Great House?'

'I can give you no account of them. I have not seen one of them to-day, except Mr. Musgrove, who just stopped and spoke through the window, but without getting off his horse; and, though I told him how ill I was, not one of them have been near me. It did not happen to suit the Miss Musgroves, I suppose, and they never put themselves out of their way.'

'You will see them yet, perhaps, before the morning is gone. It is early.'

'I never want them, I assure you. They talk and laugh a great deal too much for me. Oh!

Anne, I am so very unwell! It was quite unkind of you not to come on Thursday.'

'My dear Mary, recollect what a comfortable account you sent me of yourself! You wrote in the cheerfulest manner, and said you were perfectly well, and in no hurry for me; and that being the case, you must be aware that my wish would be to remain with Lady Russell to the last; and, besides what I felt on her account, I have really been so busy, have had so much to do, that I could not very conveniently have left Kellynch sooner.'

'Dear me! what can *you* possibly have to do?'

'A great many things, I assure you. More than I can recollect in a moment; but I can tell you some. I have been making a duplicate of the catalogue of my father's books and pictures. I have been several times in the garden with Mackenzie, trying to understand, and make him understand, which of Elizabeth's plants are for Lady Russell. I have had all my own little concerns to arrange, books and music to divide, and all my trunks to repack, from not having understood in time what was intended as to the waggons. And one thing I have had to do, Mary, of a more trying nature; going to almost every house in the parish, as a sort of take-leave. I was told that they wished it. But all these things took up a great deal of time.'

'Oh, well!' and after a moment's pause, 'But you have never asked me one word about our dinner at the Pooles yesterday.'

'Did you go then? I have made no inquiries, because I concluded you must have been obliged to give up the party.'

'Oh, yes! I went. I was very well yesterday;

nothing at all the matter with me till this morning. It would have been strange if I had not gone.'

'I am very glad you were well enough, and I hope you had a pleasant party.'

'Nothing remarkable. One always knows beforehand what the dinner will be, and who will be there. And it is so very uncomfortable, not having a carriage of one's own. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove took me, and we were so crowded! They are both so very large, and take up so much room! And Mr. Musgrove always sits forward. So, there was I, crowded into the back seat with Henrietta and Louisa.' And I think it very likely that my illness to-day may be owing to it.'

A little further perseverance in patience, and forced cheerfulness on Anne's side, produced nearly a cure on Mary's. She could soon sit upright on the sofa, and began to hope she might be able to leave it by dinner-time. Then, forgetting to think of it, she was at the other end of the room, beautifying a nosegay; then she ate her cold meat; and then she was well enough to propose a little walk.

'Where shall we go?' said she, when they were ready. 'I suppose you will not like to call at the Great House before they have been to see you?'

'I have not the smallest objection on that account,' replied Anne. 'I should never think of standing on such ceremony with people I know so well as Mrs. and the Miss Musgroves.'

'Oh! but they ought to call upon you as soon as possible. They ought to feel what is due to you as *my* sister. However, we may as well go and sit with them a little while, and when we have got that over, we can enjoy our walk.'

A VISIT TO LYME

The young people were all wild to see Lyme. Captain Wentworth talked of going there again himself; it was only seventeen miles from Upper-cross; though November, the weather was by no means bad; and, in short, Louisa, who was the most eager of the eager, having formed the resolution to go, and besides the pleasure of doing as she liked, being now armed with the idea of merit in maintaining her own way, bore down all the wishes of her father and mother for putting it off till summer; and to Lyme they were to go—Charles, Mary, Anne, Henrietta, Louisa, and Captain Wentworth.

The first heedless scheme had been to go in the morning and return at night, but to this Mr. Musgrove, for the sake of his horses, would not consent; and when it came to be rationally considered, a day in the middle of November would not leave much time for seeing a new place, after deducting seven hours, as the nature of the country required, for going and returning. They were consequently to stay the night there, and not to be expected back till the next day's dinner. This was felt to be a considerable amendment; and though they all met at the Great House at rather an early breakfast hour, and set off very punctually, it was so much past noon before the two carriages, Mr. Musgrove's coach containing the four ladies, and Charles's curricule in which he drove Captain Wentworth, were descending the long hill into Lyme, and entering upon the still steeper street of the town itself, that it was very evident they would not have more

than time for looking about them, before the light and warmth of the day were gone.

After securing accommodations, and ordering a dinner, at one of the inns, the next thing to be done was unquestionably to walk directly down to the sea. They were come too late in the year for any amusement or variety which Lyme, as a public place, might offer; the rooms were shut up, the lodgers almost all gone, scarcely any family but of the residents left; and, as there is nothing to admire in the buildings themselves, the remarkable situation of the town, the principal street almost hurrying into the water, the walk to the Cobb, skirting round the pleasant little bay, which in the season is animated with bathing machines and company, the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements, with the very beautiful line of cliffs stretching out to the east of the town, are what the stranger's eye will seek; and a very strange stranger it must be who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme to make him wish to know it better. The scenes in its neighbourhood, Charmouth, with its high grounds and extensive sweeps of country, and still more its sweet retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unwearied contemplation; the woody varieties of the cheerful village of Up Lyme, and, above all, Pinny, with its green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth declare that many a generation must have passed away since the first partial falling of the cliff prepared the ground for such a state, where a scene so wonderful and so

lovely is exhibited, as may more than equal any of the resembling scenes in the far-famed Isle of Wight: these places must be visited, and visited again, to make the worth of Lyme understood.

There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies, and they agreed to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the pavement for her feet, made him less willing upon the present occasion; he did it, however; she was safely down, and instantly, to show her enjoyment, ran up the steps to be jumped down again. He advised her against it, thought the jar too great; but no, he reasoned and talked in vain; she smiled and said, 'I am determined I will': he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement of the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless!

There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death. The horror of that moment to all who stood around!

Captain Wentworth, who had caught her up, knelt with her in his arms, looking on her with a face as pallid as her own, in an agony of silence. 'She is dead! she is dead!' screamed Mary, catching hold of her husband, and contributing with his own horror to make him immovable; and in another moment, Henrietta, sinking under the conviction,

lost her senses too, and would have fallen on the steps, but for Captain Benwick and Anne, who caught and supported her between them.

'Is there no one to help me?' were the first words which burst from Captain Wentworth, in a tone of despair, and as if all his own strength were gone.

'Go to him, go to him,' cried Anne, 'for heaven's sake go to him. I can support her myself. Leave me, and go to him. Rub her hands, rub her temples; here are salts, take them, take them.'

Captain Benwick obeyed, and Charles at the same moment disengaging himself from his wife, they were both with him; and Louisa was raised up and supported more firmly between them, and everything was done that Anne had prompted, but in vain; while Captain Wentworth, staggering against the wall for his support, exclaimed in the bitterest agony:

'Oh God! her father and mother!'

'A surgeon!' said Anne.

He caught the word; it seemed to rouse him at once, and saying only 'True, true, a surgeon this instant,' was darting away, when Anne eagerly suggested:

'Captain Benwick, would not it be better for Captain Benwick? He knows where a surgeon is to be found.'

Every one capable of thinking felt the advantage of the idea, and in a moment (it was all done in rapid moments) Captain Benwick had resigned the poor corpse-like figure entirely to the brother's care, and was off for the town with the utmost rapidity.

As to the wretched party left behind, it could scarcely be said which of the three, who were com-

pletely rational, was suffering most, Captain Wentworth, Anne, or Charles, who, really a very affectionate brother, hung over Louisa with sobs of grief, and could only turn his eyes from one sister, to see the other in a state as insensible, or to witness the hysterical agitations of his wife, calling on him for help which he could not give.

Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to quiet Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look to her for directions.

'Anne, Anne,' cried Charles, 'what is to be done next? What, in heaven's name, is to be done next?'

Captain Wentworth's eyes were also turned towards her.

'Had not she better be carried to the inn? Yes, I am sure, carry her gently to the inn.'

'Yes, yes, to the inn,' repeated Captain Wentworth, comparatively collected, and eager to be doing something. 'I will carry her myself. Musgrove, take care of the others.'

By this time the report of the accident had spread among the workmen and boatmen about the Cobb, and many were collected near them, to be useful if wanted, at any rate, to enjoy the sight of a dead young lady, nay, two dead young ladies, for it proved twice as fine as the first report. To some of the best-looking of these good people Henrietta was consigned, for, though partially revived, she was quite helpless; and in this manner, Anne walking by her side, and Charles attending to his wife, they set forward, treading back with feelings unutterable,

the ground which so lately, so very lately, and so light of heart, they had passed along.

They were not off the Cobb, before the Harvilles met them. Captain Benwick had been seen flying by their house, with a countenance which showed something to be wrong; and they had set off immediately, informed and directed, as they passed, towards the spot. Shocked as Captain Harville was, he brought senses and nerves that could be instantly useful; and a look between him and his wife decided what was to be done. She must be taken to their house; all must go to their house, and wait the surgeon's arrival there. They would not listen to scruples: he was obeyed; they were all beneath his roof; and while Louisa, under Mrs. Harville's direction, was conveyed upstairs, and given possession of her own bed, assistance, cordials, restoratives were supplied by her husband to all who needed them.

Louisa had once opened her eyes, but soon closed them again, without apparent consciousness. This had been a proof of life, however, of service to her sister; and Henrietta, though perfectly incapable of being in the same room with Louisa, was kept, by the agitation of hope and fear, from a return of her own insensibility. Mary, too, was growing calmer.

The surgeon was with them almost before it had seemed possible. They were sick with horror while he examined; but he was not hopeless. The head had received a severe contusion, but he had seen greater injuries recovered from: he was by no means hopeless; he spoke cheerfully.

That he did not regard it as a desperate case, that he did not say a few hours must end it—was at

first felt beyond the hope of most; and the ecstasy of such a reprieve, the rejoicing, deep and silent, after a few fervent ejaculations of gratitude to Heaven had been offered, may be conceived.

The tone, the look, with which 'Thank God!' was uttered by Captain Wentworth, Anne was sure could never be forgotten by her; nor the sight of him afterwards, as he sat near a table, leaning over it with folded arms, and face concealed, as if overpowered by the various feelings of his soul, and trying by prayer and reflection to calm them.

THE CONCERT

Sir Walter, his two daughters, and Mrs. Clay were the earliest of all their party at the rooms in the evening; and as Lady Dalrymple must be waited for, they took their station by one of the fires in the octagon room. But hardly were they so settled, when the door opened again, and Captain Wentworth walked in alone. Anne was the nearest to him, and making yet a little advance, she instantly spoke. He was preparing only to bow and pass on, but her gentle 'How do you do?' brought him out of the straight line to stand near her, and make inquiries in return, in spite of the formidable father and sister in the background. Their being in the background was a support to Anne; she knew nothing of their looks, and felt equal to everything which she believed right to be done.

While they were speaking, a whispering between her father and Elizabeth caught her ear. She could not distinguish, but she could guess the subject; and on Captain Wentworth's making a distant bow, she comprehended that her father had judged so well as

to give him that simple acknowledgment of acquaintance, and she was just in time by a side glance to see a slight curtsey from Elizabeth herself. This, though late and reluctant and ungracious, was yet better than nothing, and her spirits improved.

After talking, however, of the weather and Bath and the concert, their conversation began to flag, and so little was said at last that she was expecting him to go every moment; but he did not; he seemed in no hurry to leave her; and presently with renewed spirit, with a little smile, a little glow, he said:

‘I have hardly seen you since our day at Lyme. I am afraid you must have suffered from the shock, and the more from its not overpowering you at the time.’

She assured him that she had not.

‘It was a frightful hour,’ said he, ‘a frightful day!’ and he passed his hand across his eyes, as if the remembrance were still too painful; but in a moment, half smiling again, added, ‘The day has produced some effects, however, has had some consequences which must be considered as the very reverse of frightful. When you had the presence of mind to suggest that Benwick would be the properest person to fetch a surgeon, you could have little idea of his being eventually one of those most concerned in her recovery.’

‘Certainly I could have none. But it appears—I should hope it would be a very happy match. There are on both sides good principles and good temper.’

‘Yes,’ said he, looking not exactly forward, ‘but there, I think, ends the resemblance. With all my soul I wish them happy, and rejoice over every cir-

cumstance in favour of it. They have no difficulties to contend with at home, no opposition, no caprice, no delays. The Musgroves are behaving like themselves, most honourably and kindly, only anxious with true parental hearts to promote their daughter's comfort. All this is much, very much in favour of their happiness; more than perhaps——'

He stopped. A sudden recollection seemed to occur, and to give him some taste of that emotion which was reddening Anne's cheeks and fixing her eyes on the ground. After clearing his throat, however, he proceeded thus:

'I confess that I do think there is a disparity, too great a disparity, and in a point no less essential than mind. I regard Louisa Musgrove as a very amiable, sweet-tempered girl, and not deficient in understanding; but Benwick is something more. He is a clever man, a reading man; and I confess that I do consider his attaching himself to her, with some surprise. Had it been the effect of gratitude, had he learnt to love her, because he believed her to be preferring him, it would have been another thing. But I have no reason to suppose it so. It seems, on the contrary, to have been a perfectly spontaneous, untaught feeling on his side, and this surprises me. A man like him, in his situation! With a heart pierced, wounded, almost broken, Fanny Harville was a very superior creature; and his attachment to her was indeed attachment. A man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart to such a woman! He ought not—he does not.'

Either from the consciousness, however, that his friend had recovered, or from some other conscious-

ness, he went no farther; and Anne, who, in spite of the agitated voice in which the latter part had been uttered, and in spite of all the various noises of the room, the almost ceaseless slam of the door, and ceaseless buzz of persons walking through, had distinguished every word, was struck, gratified, confused, and beginning to breathe very quick, and feel an hundred things in a moment. It was impossible for her to enter on such a subject; and yet, after a pause, feeling the necessity of speaking, and having not the smallest wish for a total change, she only deviated so far as to say:

‘You were a good while at Lyme, I think?’

‘About a fortnight. I could not leave it till Louisa’s doing well was quite ascertained. I had been too deeply concerned in the mischief to be soon at peace. It had been my doing, solely mine. She would not have been obstinate if I had not been weak. The country round Lyme is very fine. I walked and rode a great deal; and the more I saw, the more I found to admire.’

‘I should very much like to see Lyme again,’ said Anne.

‘Indeed! I should not have supposed that you could have found anything in Lyme to inspire such a feeling. The horror and distress you were involved in—the stretch of mind, the wear of spirits! I should have thought your last impressions of Lyme must have been strong disgust.’

‘The last few hours were certainly very painful,’ replied Anne: ‘but when pain is over, the remembrance of it often becomes a pleasure. One does not love a place the less for having suffered in it, unless it has been all suffering, nothing but suffer-

ing, which was by no means the case at Lyme. We were only in anxiety and distress during the last two hours; and previously, there had been a great deal of enjoyment. So much novelty and beauty! I have travelled so little that every fresh place would be interesting to me. But there is real beauty at Lyme; and, in short,' (with a faint blush at some recollections) 'altogether my impressions of the place are very agreeable.'

As she ceased, the entrance door opened again, and the very party appeared for whom they were waiting. 'Lady Dalrymple, Lady Dalrymple,' was the rejoicing sound; and with all the eagerness compatible with anxious elegance, Sir Walter and his two ladies stepped forward to meet her. Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret, escorted by Mr. Elliot and Colonel Wallis, who had happened to arrive nearly at the same instant, advanced into the room. The others joined them, and it was a group in which Anne found herself also necessarily included. She was divided from Captain Wentworth. Their interesting, almost too interesting, conversation must be broken up for a time; but slight was the penance compared with the happiness which brought it on! She had learnt, in the last ten minutes, more of his feelings towards Louisa, more of all his feelings, than she dared to think of! and she gave herself up to the demands of the party, to the needful civilities of the moment, with exquisite, though agitated, sensations. She was in good humour with all. She had received ideas which disposed her to be courteous and kind to all, and to pity every one, as being less happy than herself.

The delightful emotions were a little subdued,

when, on stepping back from the group, to be joined again by Captain Wentworth, she saw that he was gone. She was just in time to see him turn into the concert-room. He was gone, he had disappeared: she felt a moment's regret. But 'they should meet again. He would look for her, he would find her out long before the evening were over; and at present, perhaps, it was as well to be asunder. She was in need of a little interval for recollection.'

Upon Lady Russell's appearance soon afterwards, the whole party was collected, and all that remained, was to marshal themselves, and proceed into the concert-room; and be of all the consequence in their power, draw as many eyes, excite as many whispers, and disturb as many people as they could.

Very, very happy were both Elizabeth and Anne Elliot as they walked in. Elizabeth, arm in arm with Miss Carteret, and looking on the broad back of the dowager Viscountess Dalrymple before her, had nothing to wish for which did not seem within her reach; and Anne—but it would be an insult to the nature of Anne's felicity, to draw any comparison between it and her sister's; the origin of one all selfish vanity, of the other all generous attachment.

Anne saw nothing, thought nothing of the brilliancy of the room. Her happiness was from within. Her eyes were bright, and her cheeks glowed,—but she knew nothing about it. She was thinking only of the last half-hour, and as they passed to their seats, her mind took a hasty range over it. His choice of subjects, his expressions, and still more his manner and look, had been such as she could see in only one light. His opinion of Louisa

Musgrove's inferiority, an opinion which he had seemed solicitous to give, his wonder at Captain Benwick, his feelings as to a first, strong attachment, sentences begun which he could not finish, his half-averted eyes, and more than half-expressive glance—all, all declared that he had a heart returning to her at least; that anger, resentment, avoidance, were no more; and that they were succeeded, not merely by friendship and regard, but by the tenderness of the past; yes, some share of the tenderness of the past. She could not contemplate the change as implying less. He must love her.

SANDITON

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

MR. PARKER, of Sanditon, Sussex.

MRS. PARKER, his wife.

MR. SIDNEY PARKER } his brothers.
MR. ARTHUR PARKER }

MISS DIANA PARKER } his sisters.
MISS SUSAN PARKER }

LADY DENHAM, a rich landowner in Sanditon.

MISS CHARLOTTE HEYWOOD, of Willingden, Kent.

THE STORY

Travelling from Tonbridge towards the Sussex coast, at the village of Willingden, Mr. and Mrs. Parker had the misfortune to be overturned in their post-chaise. Mrs. Parker escaped without hurt, but Mr. Parker strained his ankle, and had to take shelter in the house of a Mr. Heywood.

There the Parkers remained for a fortnight, carefully tended by Mrs. Heywood and her daughters. When, therefore, they resumed their journey, Charlotte, the eldest of the Heywood girls, was invited to go with them to their home at Sanditon, 'a young and rising bathing-place.'

Sanditon was Mr. Parker's hobby-horse, hardly less dear to him than his wife and children. A few years before it had been a quiet village, but he and the other chief landowner in the place, Lady Denham, had so built and praised it that it had now 'something of young renown.' Mr. Parker had even given up his old house for a new one on the hill—'our health-breathing hill.'

There was a letter awaiting Mr. Parker, from his sister Diana, saying that it was impossible for her, or her sister Susan, or her brother Arthur, to come to Sanditon. 'The sea air,' she wrote, 'would probably be the death of me'; while Susan, who had just had three teeth drawn, could 'only speak in a whisper—and fainted

away twice this morning on poor Arthur's trying to suppress a cough.' Arthur is 'tolerably well' though languid. Nevertheless, they were doing their best to send visitors to Sanditon—two large families, 'one a rich West Indian from Surrey, the other a most respectable Girl's Boarding School, or Academy, from Camberwell.'

Despite this letter, a post-chaise arrived not many days later, bringing the 'invalids' to lodgings in the Terrace, and there Charlotte went 'to drink tea with them' (see page 215). Soon after tea, Miss Diana discovered that the two families she had been so busy in securing as visitors to Sanditon—the West Indian from Surrey and the Camberwell Seminary—were one and the same, and consisted only of Mrs. Griffiths, the principal, and three of her 'young ladies.'

The next visitor to Sanditon was more interesting—Mr. Sidney Parker, a young man of 'about seven or eight and twenty, very good-looking, with a decided air of ease and fashion.' But with his arrival the story breaks off, and how it would have ended we do not know. Doubtless in the newly arrived Mr. Parker we have encountered the future husband of Miss Charlotte Heywood.

WITH EVERY CONVENIENCE

'And whose very snug-looking place is this?' said Charlotte as, in a sheltered dip within two miles of the sea, they passed close by a moderate-sized house, well fenced and planted, and rich in the garden, orchard and meadows which are the best embellishments of such a dwelling. 'It seems to have as many comforts about it as Willingden.'

'Ah!' said Mr. Parker, 'this is my old house, the house of my forefathers, the house where I and all my brothers and sisters were born and bred, and where my own three eldest children were born, where Mrs. Parker and I lived till within the last two years, till our new house was finished. I am glad you are pleased with it. It is an honest old place, and Hillier keeps it in very good order. I have given it up, you know, to the man who occupies

the chief of my land. *He* gets a better house by it—and I, a rather better situation! One other hill brings us to Sanditon—modern Sanditon—a beautiful spot. Our ancestors, you know, always built in a hole. Here were we, pent down in this little contracted nook, without air or view, only one mile and three-quarters from the noblest expanse of ocean between the South Foreland and the Land's End, and without the smallest advantage from it. You will not think I have made a bad exchange, when we reach Trafalgar House, which, by the bye, I almost wish I had not named Trafalgar; for Waterloo is more the thing now. However, Waterloo is in reserve; and, if we have encouragement enough this year for a little crescent to be ventured on (as I trust we shall), then we shall be able to call it Waterloo Crescent; and the name joined to the form of the building, which always takes, will give us the command of lodgers. In a good season we should have more applications than we could attend to.'

'It was always a very comfortable house,' said Mrs. Parker, looking at it through the back window with something like the fondness of regret. 'And such a nice garden, such an excellent garden.'

'Yes, my love, but *that* we may be said to carry with us. *It* supplies us, as before, with all the fruit and vegetables we want; and we have, in fact, all the comfort of an excellent kitchen garden, without the constant eyesore of its formalities; or the yearly nuisance of its decaying vegetation. Who can endure a cabbage bed in October?'

'Oh, dear, yes! We are quite as well off for garden stuff as ever we were, for if it is forgot to

be brought at any time, we can always buy what we want at Sanditon House. The gardener there is glad enough to supply us. But it was a nice place for the children to run about in. So shady in summer!’

‘My dear, we shall have shade enough on the hill and more than enough in the course of a very few years; the growth of my plantations is a general astonishment. In the meanwhile we have the canvas awning, which gives us the most complete comfort within doors; and you can get a parasol at Whitby’s for little Mary at any time, or a large bonnet at Jebb’s; and as for the boys, I must say I would rather *them* run about in the sunshine than not. I am sure we agree, my dear, in wishing our boys to be as hardy as possible.’

‘Yes, indeed, I am sure we do, and I will get Mary a little parasol, which will make her as proud as can be. How grave she will walk about with it, and fancy herself quite a little woman. Oh! I have not the smallest doubt of our being a great deal better off where we are now. If we any of us want to bathe, we have not a quarter of a mile to go. But, you know,’ (still looking back) ‘one loves to look at an old friend, at a place where one has been happy. The Hilliers did not seem to feel the storms last winter at all. I remember seeing Mrs. Hillier after one of those dreadful nights, when *we* had been literally rocked in our bed, and she did not seem at all aware of the wind being anything more than common.’

‘Yes, yes, that’s likely enough. *We* have all the grandeur of the storm, with less real danger, because the wind meeting with nothing to oppose or confine

it around our house, simply rages and passes on; while down in this gutter nothing is known of the state of the air below the tops of the trees, and the inhabitants may be taken totally unawares by one of those dreadful currents which do more mischief in a valley, when they *do* arise, than an open country ever experiences in the heaviest gale. But, my dear love, as to garden stuff, you were saying that any accidental omission is supplied in a moment by Lady Denham's gardener; but it occurs to me that we ought to go elsewhere upon such occasions, and that old Stringer and his son have a higher claim. I encouraged him to set up, and am afraid he does not do very well; that is, there has not been time enough yet. He *will* do very well beyond a doubt, but at first it is uphill work; and therefore we must give him what help we can, and when any vegetables or fruit happen to be wanted—and it will not be amiss to have them often wanted, to have something or other forgotten most days, just to have a nominal supply, you know, that poor old Andrew may not lose his daily job, but, in fact, to buy the chief of our consumption of the Stringers.'

'Very well, my love, that can be easily done; and cook will be satisfied, which will be a great comfort, for she is always complaining of old Andrew now, and says he never brings her what she wants. There—now the old house is quite left behind.'

'A VERY POOR CREATURE'

When they were all finally seated, after some removals to look at the sea and the Hotel, Charlotte's place was by Arthur, who was sitting next to the fire with a degree of enjoyment which gave

a good deal of merit to his civility in wishing her to take his chair. There was nothing dubious in her manner of declining it, and he sat down again with much satisfaction. She drew back her chair to have all the advantage of his person as a screen, and was very thankful for every inch of back and shoulders beyond her preconceived idea. Arthur was heavy in eye as well as figure, but by no means indisposed to talk; and while the other four were chiefly engaged together, he evidently felt it no penance to have a fine young woman next to him, requiring in common politeness some attention—as his brother, who felt the decided want of some motive for action, some powerful object of animation for him, observed with considerable pleasure. Such was the influence of youth and bloom that he began even to make a sort of apology for having a fire. ‘We should not have one at home,’ said he, ‘but the sea air is always damp. I am not afraid of anything so much as damp.’

‘I am so fortunate,’ said Charlotte, ‘as never to know whether the air is damp or dry. It has always some property that is wholesome and invigorating to me.’

‘I like the air, too, as well as anybody can,’ replied Arthur; ‘I am very fond of standing at an open window when there is no wind, but unluckily a damp air does not like *me*. It gives me the rheumatism. You are not rheumatic, I suppose?’

‘Not at all.’

‘That’s a great blessing. But perhaps you are nervous.’

‘No, I believe not. I have no idea that I am.’

‘I am very nervous. To say the truth, nerves

are the worst part of my complaints in *my* opinion. My sisters think me bilious, but I doubt it.'

'You are quite in the right to doubt it as long as you possibly can, I am sure.'

'If I were bilious,' he continued, 'you know, wine would disagree with me, but it always does me good. The more wine I drink (in moderation) the better I am. I am always best of an evening. If you had seen me to-day before dinner, you would have thought me a very poor creature.'

Charlotte could believe it. She kept her countenance, however, and said; 'As far as I can understand what nervous complaints are, I have a great idea of the efficacy of air and exercise for them: daily, regular exercise; and I should recommend rather more of it to *you* than I suspect you are in the habit of taking.'

'Oh! I am very fond of exercise myself,' he replied, 'and mean to walk a great deal while I am here, if the weather is temperate. I shall be out every morning before breakfast, and take several turns upon the Terrace, and you will often see me at Trafalgar House.'

'But you do not call a walk to Trafalgar House much exercise?'

'Not as to mere distance, but the hill is so steep! Walking up that hill, in the middle of the day, would throw me into such a perspiration! You would see me all in a bath by the time I got there! I am very subject to perspiration, and there cannot be a surer sign of nervousness.'

They were now advancing so deep in physics that Charlotte viewed the entrance of the servant with the tea-things as a very fortunate interruption.

It produced a great and immediate change. The young man's attentions were instantly lost. He took his own cocoa from the tray—which seemed provided with almost as many teapots, etc., as there were persons in company, Miss Parker drinking one sort of herb-tea, and Miss Diana another—and, turning completely to the fire, sat coddling and cooking it to his own satisfaction, and toasting some slices of bread brought up ready prepared in the toast-rack; and till it was all done, she heard nothing of his voice but the murmuring of a few broken sentences of self-approbation and success. When his toils were over, however, he moved back his chair into as gallant a line as ever, and proved that he had not been working only for himself, by his earnest invitation to her to take both cocoa and toast. She was already helped to tea, which surprised him, so totally self-engrossed had he been.

'I thought I should have been in time,' said he, 'but cocoa takes a great deal of boiling.'

'I am much obliged to you,' replied Charlotte, 'but I *prefer* tea.'

'Then I will help myself,' said he. 'A large dish of rather weak cocoa every evening agrees with me better than anything.'

It struck her, however, as he poured out this rather weak cocoa, that it came forth in a very fine, dark-coloured stream; and, at the same moment, his sisters both crying out 'Oh! Arthur, you get your cocoa stronger and stronger every evening', with Arthur's somewhat conscious reply of "'Tis rather stronger than it should be to-night', convinced her that Arthur was by no means so fond of being starved as they could desire, or as he felt proper

himself. He was certainly very happy to turn the conversation on dry toast, and hear no more of his sisters.

'I hope you will eat some of this toast, said he, 'I reckon myself a very good toaster; I never burn my toasts, I never put them too near the fire at first; and yet, you see, there is not a corner but what is well browned. I hope you like dry toast.'

'With a reasonable quantity of butter spread over it, very much,' said Charlotte, 'but not otherwise.'

'No more do I,' said he, exceedingly pleased. 'We think quite alike there. So far from dry toast being wholesome, I think it a very bad thing for the stomach. Without a little butter to soften it, it hurts the coats of the stomach. I am sure it does. I will have the pleasure of spreading some for you directly, and afterwards I will spread some for myself. Very bad indeed for the coats of the stomach, but there is no convincing some people. It irritates and acts like a nutmeg grater.'

He could not get the command of the butter, however, without a struggle; his sisters accusing him of eating a great deal too much, and declaring he was not to be trusted; and he maintaining that he only ate enough to secure the coats of his stomach; and, besides, he only wanted it now for Miss Heywood. Such a plea must prevail, he got the butter and spread away for her with an accuracy of judgment which at least delighted himself; but when her toast was done, and he took his own in hand, Charlotte could hardly contain herself as she saw him watching his sisters, while he scrupulously scraped off almost as much butter as he put on, and then seized an odd moment for adding a great dab

just before it went into his mouth. Certainly Mr Arthur Parker's enjoyments in invalidism were very different from his sisters—by no means so spiritualized. A good deal of earthy dross hung about him. Charlotte could not but suspect him of adopting that line of life, principally for the indulgence of an indolent temper, and to be determined on having no disorders but such as called for warm rooms and good nourishment. In one particular, however, she soon found that he had caught something from *them*.

'What!' said he, 'do you venture upon two dishes of strong green tea in one evening? What nerves you must have! How I envy you. Now, if *I* were to swallow only one such dish, what do you think its effect would be upon me?'

'Keep you awake perhaps all night,' replied Charlotte, meaning to overthrow his attempts at surprise by the grandeur of her own conceptions.

'Oh! if that were all!' he exclaimed. 'No, it acts on me like poison and would entirely take away the use of my right side before I had swallowed it five minutes. It sounds almost incredible, but it has happened to me so often that I cannot doubt it. The use of my right side is entirely taken away for several hours!'

'It sounds rather odd, to be sure,' answered Charlotte, coldly, 'but I dare say it would be proved to be the simplest thing in the world by those who have studied right sides and green tea scientifically and thoroughly understand all the possibilities of their action on each other.'

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